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WORKS OF THOMAS MANTON

THE

WORKS OF THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOL. XIII.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XIII.
CONTAINING
SEVERAL SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V.;
ALSO
SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.

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SERMONS

UPON THE

FIFTH CHAPTER OF 2 CORINTHIANS.

SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V.

SERMON IX.

Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.—2 Cor. v. 6.

FROM the connection with the former branch, you see a christian's condition in the world is mixed ; he is comforted, but not satisfied ; his faith is satisfied, for he is confident, but his love is not satisfied ; for 'while he is at home in the body he is absent from the Lord.' And that not for a little time only, but for his whole course, as long as his life shall last, all the while that he is at home in the body. This is added to show the reason,—1. Of groaning. 2. Of confidence. Of groaning, because we are absent from Christ's presence and full communion with him in glory. Of confidence ; we must be sometime present with the Lord. Now we are not ; therefore we have a certain persuasion, that there shall be granted to us a nearer access after death. Then we look cheerfully upon death, as that which bringeth us home to God, from whom these earthly bodies keep us as strangers.

Two points offer themselves to us :—

1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he sojourneth in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an earthly tabernacle.

2. The main reason why a christian counteth himself not at home, is because he is absent from the Lord.

Doct. 1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he sojourneth in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an earthly tabernacle. The Greek words run thus : We, indwelling in the body, dwell forth from the Lord ; that is, from the Lord Jesus, the beholding of whose glory and presence we must want so long, which is grievous to a christian. Instances ; Abraham, who had best right by God's immediate donation : Heb. xi. 9, 'He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country ;' as in a place wherein he was to stay but a while, and to pass through it to a better country. David, who had most possession, an opulent and powerful king ; Abraham inherited or purchased nothing in the land of Canaan, but a burying-place ; but David counted himself a stranger too : Ps. xxxix. 12, 'I am a stranger and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were.' He that bore so full a sway in that land, did not look upon the world as a place of rest and

stability. But it may be he spoke this when he was chased like a flea, or hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. No; in the midst of all his wealth and opulence, when he had offered many cart-loads of gold and silver for the building of the temple. See 1 Chron. xxix. 15, 'For we are strangers and sojourners before thee, as were all our fathers.' Nay, Jesus Christ, who was lord-paramount, telleth us, John xvii. 16, 'I am not of this world.' He that was Lord of all, had neither house nor home; he passed through the world to sanctify it as a place of service, but he settled not his constant residence here as in a place of rest. We do not inhabit, only pass through to a better place.

Reasons—

1. Our birth and parentage is from heaven. Everything tendeth to the place of its original: men love their native soil; things bred in the water delight to return thither; inanimate things tend to their centre; a stone will fall to the ground, though broken in pieces by the fall; air imprisoned in the bowels and caverns of the earth causes terrible convulsions and earthquakes, till it get up to its own place. All things seek to return thither from whence they came; grace that came from heaven carrieth the heart thither again. Jerusalem from above is the mother of us all. Heaven is our native country, but the world is a strange place; and therefore, though the man be at home, yet the christian is not; he is out of his proper place. Contempt of the world is usually made the fruit of our regeneration: 1 John v. 4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.' There is something in them that entitleth itself to God, and worketh towards him, and carrieth the soul thither where God sheweth most of himself. So, 2 Peter i. 4, 'We are made partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption which is in the world through lust.' The world will not satisfy the divine nature; there is a strong inclination in us, which disposeth us to look after another world, 1 Peter i. 3. As soon as made children, we reckon upon a child's portion; another nature hath another aim and tendency. There is a double reason why the new creature cannot be satisfied here. (1.) Here is not enough dispensed to answer God's love in the covenant. *I will be your God*, noteth the gift of some better thing than this world can afford unto us: Heb. xi. 16, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.' That title is not justified till he give us eternal rewards, for to be a God to any, is to be an infinite, eternal benefactor. Compare Mat. xxii. 32, with the fore-mentioned place. (2.) Here is not enough to satisfy the desire, expectation and inclination of the renewed heart. The aim of it is carried after two things—perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect conformity to God. There is their home, where they may be with God, and where they may be free from sin. Their love to Christ is such, that where he is there they must be: Phil. i. 23, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ:' Col. iii. 1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' And there is a final, perfect estate, to which the new creature is tending; when it shall never dishonour God more, but be made like him, and completely subject to him; when never troubled with sin more.

2. There lieth their treasure and their inheritance. It is said, Eph.

i. 3, that Christ hath ‘blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places.’ He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in earthly places, hath he not? Here he hath adopted, justified, and sanctified us in part, but the full accomplishment is reserved for the world to come. God would not dispense the fulness of our blessedness in the present world; that is an unquiet place; we are not out of gunshot and harm’s way, nor in an earthly paradise. There Adam enjoyed God among the beasts, but we shall enjoy him in heaven among the angels. In the world God would show his bounty to all his creatures—a common inn for sons and bastards; the place of trial, not of recompence; the place where God hath set his footstool, not his throne, Isa. lxvi. ; it is Satan’s walk, the devil’s circuit: ‘Whence comest thou? From compassing the earth to and fro,’ Job ii. 2; a place defiled with sin, and beareth the marks of it, given to all mankind in common: Ps. cxv. 16, ‘The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s, but the earth hath he given to the children of men;’ the slaughter-house and shambles of the saints, for they are slain upon earth; a receptacle for elect and reprobate.

3. There are all our kindred. There is our home and country, where our Father is, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the holy ones of God: *Ubi pater, ibi patria.* We pray to him, ‘Our father which art in heaven.’ It is heaven that is our Father’s house, and the everlasting mansions of the blessed. There is our redeemer and elder brother, Col. iii. 1; ‘the heaven of heavens doth contain him.’ There are the best of the family, Mat. viii. 12; there is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a misery to be strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, to be shut out from the society of God’s people; but in heaven there are other manner of saints there. To be shut out from the company of the blessed is a dreadful excommunication indeed.

4. There we abide longest. An inn cannot be called our home; here we abide but for a night, but there for ever with the Lord. The world must be surely left; if we had a certain term of years fixed, yet it is very short in comparison of eternity. Therefore since we live longest in the other world, there is our home: Mic. ii. 10, ‘Arise, depart hence, this is not your rest.’ God speaketh it of the land of Canaan, when they had polluted it with sin. It is true of all the world; sin hath brought in death, and there must be a riddance. This life is but a passage to eternity. Israel first dwelt in a wandering camp, before they came to dwell in cities and walled towns; and the mysteries of their religion were first seated in a tabernacle, and then in a temple; so here first in a mortal, frail condition, and then come to the place of our eternal rest. There is an appointed time for us all to remove: Job vii. 1, ‘There is an appointed time for man upon earth; his days are as the days of an hireling.’ An hireling when he hath done his work, then he receiveth his wages, and is gone. Actors when they have finished their parts, they go within the curtain, and are seen no more. So when we have served our generation and finished our course, our place will know us no more, and God will furnish the world with a new scene, both of acts and actors.

5. The necessary graces that belong to a christian show that a christian is not yet in his proper place; as faith, hope, and love.

[1.] Faith hath another world in prospect and view ; and our great aim is to come at it. Sense sheweth us we have no abiding city upon earth, but faith points at one to come, where Christ is, and we shall one day be. Now this faith were but a fancy, if we should always abide in this earthly tabernacle, and there were no other life to be expected when this is at an end. The salvation of our souls is called the end of our faith ; 1 Peter i. 9, that is the main blessing we look for from Christ. So 1 Tim. i. 16, ‘We believe on him to life everlasting.’ So Heb. x. 39, ‘We are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of their souls.’ The great satisfaction that the immortal soul hath by faith is, that it seeth a place of eternal abode, and therefore it cannot settle here, it must look higher than the present world. Faith persuadeth us that the end of our creation and regeneration was far more noble than a little miserable abode here. There is no man in the world, but if he follow the light of reason, much more if he be guided by the light of grace, will seek a place and an estate of rest, wherein he may finally quiet his mind. Therefore faith cannot be satisfied till we reach our heavenly mansion ; he is unworthy of an immortal soul that looketh no further than earthly things.

[2.] Hope was made for things to come, especially for our full and final happiness. God fits us with grace as well as with happiness ; he doth not only make a grant of a glorious estate, but hath given us grace to expect it. Hope would be of no use, if it did not look out for another condition : Rom. viii. 24, ‘Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it ?’ No ; there is something to come ; and therefore because we have it not in possession, we lift up the head, and look for it with a longing and desirous expectation. It is said, Col. i. 5, ‘That our hope is laid up for us in heaven.’ A believer’s portion is not given him in hand ; he hath it only in hope. He hath it not, but it is safely kept for his use, and that in a most sure place in heaven, where ‘thieves cannot break through and steal.’

[3.] Love. The saints have heard much of Christ, read much of Christ, tasted and felt much of Christ ; they would fain see him, and be with him : 1 Peter i. 8, ‘Whom having not seen ye love.’ Many love Jesus Christ, whom they have not seen in the flesh, or conversed with him bodily ; but though they have not seen him, they desire to see him ; for love is an affection of union, it desireth to be with the party loved. The ‘Spirit and the bride saith, Come,’ Rev. xxii. 17. The adulteress saith, Stay away ; but the loving spouse and the bride saith, Come. Carnal men will not give their vote this way, but the soul that loveth Christ would have him either come to them, or take them up to him ; their souls are not at ease till this be accomplished.

Use 1. Let us give in our names among them that profess themselves to be strangers and sojourners here in the world. This confession must be made, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. We must carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims.

1. Let us be drawing home as fast as we can. A traveller would be passing over his journey as soon as may be ; so should we be hastening home in our desires and affections. It is but a sorry home

to be at home in the body, when all that while we are absent from the Lord. There is a tendency in the new nature to God, a perfect enjoyment of God, and a perfect subjection to God; therefore our desires should still draw homewards: Heb. xi. 16, ‘They desire a country, that is, an heavenly.’ All that have gotten a new heart and nature from the Lord, their hearts run upon the expectation of what God hath promised; they cannot be satisfied with anything they enjoy here.

2. By making serious provision for the other world: Mat. vi. 33, ‘But first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you.’ Men that bestow all their labour and travail about earthly things, and neglect their precious and immortal souls, they are contented to be at home in the body, and look no further; but when you are furnishing the soul with grace, and grow more heavenly, strict and mortified, you are more meet: Col. i. 12, ‘Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’ They that wallow in the delights and contentments of the flesh, dislike strictness and holiness. What should they do with heaven? they are not fit for it. Every degree of grace is a step nearer home: Ps. lxxxiv. 7, ‘They shall go on from strength to strength.’ Get clearer evidences of your right to everlasting life: 1 Tim. vi. 19, ‘Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.’ The comfort of what you have done for God will abide with you; therefore let it be your care and great business not so much to live well here, as to live well hereafter; our wealth, and honours, and dignities do not follow us into the other world, but our works do. Consider the place you are bound for, and what commodities grow current there, what will stead you when other things fail.

3. Mortify carnal desires: 1 Peter ii. 11, ‘As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.’ The flesh-pots of Egypt made Israel despise Canaan. Fleshly lusts do only gratify the body, as corrupted with sin; and therefore they must be subdued and kept under by those who have higher and better things to care for. If we were to live here for ever, it were no such absurd thing to gratify the flesh, and please the body; though even so it were not a practice so suitable to the rational life, yet not altogether so absurd, as when we must be gone, and shortly dislodge, and when we have great and precious promises of happiness in another world: 2 Cor. vii. 1, ‘Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.’ That bindeth it more upon us. These lusts blind the mind, besot the heart, burden us in our journey homeward, divert our thoughts and care; yea, being indulged and allowed, they make us forfeit heaven, and will prove at length the ruin of our souls. Sowing to the flesh cuts off the hopes of happiness, Gal. vi. 8. Well then, bethink yourselves, if you look for heaven, will you cherish the flesh, which is the enemy of your salvation? Do you expect a room among the angels, and will you live as those who are slaves of the devil? The world is not your country, and will you wholly be occupied and taken up about worldly things, what you shall eat and drink, and what you shall put on?

4. Patiently endure the inconveniences of your pilgrimage. Strangers will meet with hard usage. It is no news that all things do not succeed with the heirs of promise according to their heart's desire here in the world: 'The world will love its own, but they are chosen out of the world,' John xv. 19. Christ died not for this, that we should be dandled upon the world's knees. As long as the end shall be happy, let us bear the inconveniences of the way with the more patience. A christian, that is convinced of a life to come, should not be greatly dismayed at any temporal accident. The discourse between Modestus, a governor under Valence and Basil the Great, in Nazianzen's twentieth Oration, is very notable to this purpose. When he threatened him with banishment, 'I know no banishment that know no abiding-place here in the world. I cannot say that this place is mine, nor can I say the other is not mine, wherever God shall cast me; rather all is the Lord's, whose stranger and pilgrim I am. Every place is alike near to heaven, and thither I am tending.' This is to carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims. Indeed, to be more indifferent as to the good things of this life, and to take them as God sendeth them; but heaven will make amends for all. Many times the world proveth a step-mother. The ground that bringeth forth thistles and nettles of its own accord will not bear choicer plants. But it is your comfort you shall be transplanted, Heb. x. 34. From whence do you fetch your supports in any cross? 1 John iii. 1. A prince that travelleth abroad in disguise, may be slighted and ill treated, but you have a glorious inheritance reserved for you; therefore this should be your comfort and support.

5. Beg direction from God, that you may go the shortest way home: Ps. cxix. 19, 'I am a stranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments from me.' It concerneth a stranger to look after a better and a more durable estate; there is no direction how to attain it but in the word of God, and there is no saving understanding of it but in the light of his Spirit. This we must earnestly seek, that in everything we may understand our duty, that we be not found in a false way: 'Saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. iii. 13. Make a hard shift to scramble to heaven.

6. Get as much of home as you can in your pilgrimage, in the earnest and first fruits of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' In ordinances; Mat. xxvi. 29, 'But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' Meditation, word, prayer and communion of saints.

Doct. 2. The main reason why a good christian counteth himself not at home, is, because he is absent from the Lord, while he is in the body.

I shall here inquire,—

1. How believers are absent from the Lord.
2. Why this maketh them look upon the world as a strange place, and heaven as their house.
1. How are believers absent from the Lord, when he dwelleth in them, as in his temple, and there is a near and close union between

him and them? And he hath promised, that where two or three are gathered together in his name he is in the midst of them?

I answer, Christ is with us indeed, but we are not with him. He dwelleth in us by his grace, and influenceth us with quickening and strength, but he is at a distance; we can have no personal converse with him, though there be a spiritual commerce between us. But in heaven we shall be translated to Christ, and enjoy the fulness of his grace; here 'we walk by faith, and not by sight,' as it is in the next verse. In short, our communion with Christ is—(1.) not immediate; (2.) nor full; (3.) often interrupted.

[1.] It is not immediate. We see him now as covered and veiled in ordinances and providences, but then we shall see him face to face. In providences we enjoy him only at the second or third hand: Hos. ii. 21, 22, 'I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.' The mercy and goodness of God passeth from creature to creature before it cometh to us. So in ordinances, all that we have from him is by the means of the word and sacraments; there we shall enjoy him without means, and without these external helps, for there God will be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28. We shall then ever be before him, in his eye and presence; and 'in his presence is fulness of joy,' Ps. xvi. 11. Our communion with him is not a fancy, but indeed: 1 John i. 3, 'Truly our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' But this commerce is maintained at a distance; he is in heaven, and we are upon earth; it is maintained by faith, but then all is evident to sense.

[2.] Now it is not full. There is a defect both in the pipe and the vessel; we cannot contain all that he is able to give out, nor can the means convey it to us. The means are as narrow conduits from the fountain, or as creeks from the sea. The fountain could send forth more water, but the pipe or conduit can convey no more. The sea could pour a greater flood, but the creek can receive no more. When God dispensest himself by means, either in a way of punishment or blessing, he doth not give out himself in that fulness and latitude as when he is all in all. In punishing the wicked here, he punisheth us by a creature. A giant striking with a straw cannot put forth his strength with it. So in blessing, no creature nor ordinance can convey all the goodness of God to us. Therefore now we have an imperfect power against sin, imperfect peace and comfort in our consciences, an imperfect love to God; but when our communion is immediate, then will it be full. We converse with Christ without let and impediment, and he maketh out himself to us in a greater latitude and fulness than now.

[3.] Our communion with Christ is often interrupted; but in glory we shall enjoy his company for ever, and shall have constant and near fellowship: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'We shall be ever with the Lord.' That day is never darkened with cloud or night; we shall meet, and never part more; all distance is gone, and weakness is gone, and we shall everlasting abide before his throne.

2. Why God's children count themselves not at home till they are admitted into this perpetual society with Christ.

[1.] Because this is the blessedness which is promised to them.

And therefore they expect it, and thirst after it : John xii. 26, ‘Where I am, there shall my servant be.’ It is our duty to follow him wherever he leadeth us here, and it is our happiness to be with him for ever hereafter. We often look upon the happiness of heaven, as it freeth us from all pains and torments. No, the chiefest part is to be with Christ. Our glory and happiness consists much in being in his company. So when he maketh his last will and testament : John xvii. 24, ‘Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be where I am, and behold my glory.’ That is it ; he prayeth they may be brought safe there, and be happy for evermore.

[2.] This is that which is highly prized by them, to be where Christ is. Why is this so much prized by true christians ?

(1.) Out of thankfulness to Christ’s delighting in our presence. Therefore much more should we delight in his. He longed for the society of men before the creation of the world : Prov. viii. 31, ‘I rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.’ Christ delighted in all the creatures, as they were the effects of his wisdom, and goodness, and power ; but chiefly in men, as they were the objects of his grace, capable of God’s image and favour. Thus he longed for the company of men before the world was. When the world was once made, he delighted to appear in human shape before his incarnation ; as Gen. xviii., a man appeared to Abraham, and he is called Jehovah ; and Zech. i. 10, 11, ‘And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees, answered and said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.’ As if he would try how it would fit him to become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. When the fulness of time was come, John i. 4, ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’ as long as it was necessary. When he departed, he had a mind of returning ; before he went away, and removed his bodily presence from us, his heart was upon meeting and fellowship again, and getting his people to him : John xiv. 2, ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions ; I go to prepare a place for you ; I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also.’ Until the time that the meeting cometh, he vouchsafeth his powerful presence to us : Mat. xxviii. 20, ‘Lo, I am with you to the end of the world.’ He would never have gone from us if our necessities did not require it ; it was necessary that he should die for our sins. That nothing might hinder our believing and coming to him, it was necessary that he should go to heaven. If our happiness had lain here, he would have been with us here ; but it doth not, it is reserved for us in the heavens ; therefore he must go there to prepare a place for us. Before he went he desired we might be there where he is ; as if he could not take content in heaven till he hath his faithful with him. Now he is gone away, he will tarry no longer than our affairs require. To have our souls with him, that doth not content him, till he come and fetch our bodies also, that we may follow him in our whole person, and then we and he shall never part, when all the elect shall meet in one common rendezvous and congregation. Now shall not all this breed a reciprocal affection in us ?

(2.) Out of love to Christ. We would fain get near him who is our great friend : Ps. lxxiii. 25, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee ?’

And the saints are described to be those that ‘love his appearing,’ 2 Tim. iv. 8. If we have heard him, if we be christians indeed, if we loved him when we saw him not, and delighted in him, and tasted his grace in truth, and felt his power, we shall long to be near him, and see him, and converse with him intimately.

(3.) Taste. Communion begun maketh us long for communion perfected: Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, ‘O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.’

(4.) Their complete happiness dependeth upon it: 1 John iii. 2, ‘We shall see him as he is, and be like him;’ John xvii. 24, ‘That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.’ Christ cannot be fully seen on this side time.

Use 1. Is to condemn and disprove them from being true christians that cannot abide the presence of Christ. The Gadarenes desired him to depart out of their coasts, Mat. viii. Yet carnal men have such a spirit, Job xxii. 17, ‘which say unto God, Depart from us;’ cannot abide Christ in their neighbourhood, that he should come near their consciences.

Use 2. Is to press us to two things.

1. To prize the communion and fellowship of Christ for the present. It is constant and habitual; that ‘he may dwell in your hearts by faith,’ Eph. iii. 17. Where Christ taketh up his abode, there his Spirit is the fountain of life, Gal. ii. 20; our defence against temptations: 1 John iv. 4, ‘Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world;’ ‘The seed and hope of glory,’ Col. i. 27. Solemn and actual in holy duties; there is heaven begun, there we ‘behold his face in righteousness,’ Ps. xvii. 15; ‘And a day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,’ Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

2. Let us long to be with him, to get out of the pesthouse of the world, and the prison of corrupt nature. I allude to that, Gen. xxiv. 57, 58, ‘And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said to her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.’ Wilt thou go to Jesus? Lord, I will go with thee. Hindrances are these.

[1.] A surfeit on the sinful pleasures and contentments of this world. This weakens your desires, and taketh off the edge of your affections. Lot lingered when he was to go out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 16.

[2.] Do not darken your confidence by your sin and folly. Then you will as a malefactor fly from him as a judge, rather than rejoice to be with him as a saviour.

SERMON X.

For we walk by faith, and not by sight.—2 COR. v. 7.

In this verse a reason is given why we are said to be absent from the Lord while we are at home in the body; because all things are

transacted between him and us by faith, and not by sight or immediate vision—‘For we walk,’ &c.

These words do notably set forth to us both the nature of faith, and the condition of believers here in the world.

1. They set forth the nature of faith, which mainly goeth upon things unseen, or not obvious to present sense.

2. The condition of a believer in the world: he doth not now see God face to face; he hath only the promise of blessedness, not the enjoyment.

But that I may draw forth the full scope and sense of the words, I shall give you six observations or propositions.

1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other.

2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven; the one is of use to us in this world, the other is reserved for the world to come.

3. That till we have sight it is some advantage that we have faith.

4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth and desireth.

5. That if we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight, or hereafter enjoy the beatifical vision.

6. That those that have faith must walk by it.

Doct. 1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other. Faith is a grace that is conversant about things unseen, or a dependence upon God for something that lieth out of sight. That this is the essential property and nature of faith appeareth by the definition of it, Heb. xi. 1, ‘It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.’ The objects of faith are things invisible and future. The Lord is absent from us, who maketh the promise; and heaven, which is the great promise which he hath promised us, is yet to come. The nature of faith and hope is destroyed if the object be seen and present, or ready at hand to be enjoyed: Rom. viii. 24, ‘For hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he hope for it?’ Vision and possession exclude faith and hope; there is a constant opposition, you see, between faith and sight; so that we may know that we have faith, when we can believe those things which are promised, though we have little probability in sense or reason to expect them. And hereby we may know the measure as well as the nature of our faith, for the excellency and strength of it is in believing things upon God’s word, to which sense giveth little encouragement, as appeareth by those words of Christ to Thomas: John xx. 29, ‘Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; but blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed.’ Thomas must have the object of faith under the view of his senses, which though it did not argue a nullity in his faith, yet a very great weakness and imbecility. Weak christians must be carried in arms, dandled upon knees, fed with sensible pledges and ocular demonstrations, or else they are ready to faint; but strong christians can believe above sense and against sense. As it is said of the father of the faithful that he believed in hope and against hope: Rom. iv. 18, 19, ‘And considered not his own body, being dead, being an hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he

staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' The more faith can live upon the word of God, the better, though the things believed be neither felt nor seen; and the less of sensible demonstration we require, the stronger the faith ever. This is true in all the objects that faith is conversant about; I shall instance in some. The person of Christ. Many believed on him though they had never seen him in the flesh, and therefore their faith is commended: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen ye love, and in whom ye believe, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' It was an advantage certainly to converse with Christ personally here upon earth, but faith can embrace him in the word though it never saw him in the flesh. So for the threatenings, when we can tremble at the word; as Josiah did when he heard the curses of the law, though there were no dangers nigh; we do not read of any actual disturbance and trouble at that time in the nation. So many times when an age is very corrupt, and things are ripe for judgment, and God giveth warning, alas! few take it or lay it to heart; they are not affected with things till they feel them. Few can see a storm when the clouds are a-gathering, they securely build upon their present ease and peace, though God be angry. But in the eye of faith a sinful estate is always dangerous, and they humble themselves while the judgment is but in its causes; as it is said, Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.' Mark, things not seen are still matter of faith; he saw them in the warning of God, though he could not any way else see a flood a-coming. So for God's aid and succour in a time of danger: Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' To appearance he was like to be swallowed up, being pursued by a wrathful and puissant king; but the terrors of sense may be easily vanquished by those invisible succours which faith relieth upon. So in all matters of practical experience. In prosperity we have but too much confidence; but when we are lessened in the world, and cut short, we are full of diffidence and distrustful fears: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Even a child of God, when he gets a carnal pillow to rest upon, lieth down and sleepeth securely, and dreameth many a pleasant dream, and is full of confidence; but when God taketh away his pillow from under his head, then he is as diffident as formerly confident. God is the same, his promises the same, his covenant the same, the mediator the same; but we are much changed, because we look to things seen, and live upon things seen. In danger how are we troubled about protection, in deep poverty about provisions and maintenance! If sick and nigh unto death, how little do the promises of pardon and eternal life prevail! In perplexed affairs how little can we unravel ourselves, and refer the issue to God! Faith is staggered because we cannot believe in hope against hope. We must have something in view and sight; faith yieldeth no relief to us. Let me instance in a case of spiritual sense in troubles of conscience, when God's law speaketh him an enemy, and conscience feeleth him

an enemy. How long is it ere we can bring men to any kind of hope by Christ, notwithstanding the rich and free offers of his grace, or engage them, when the curse of the law cleaveth to their consciences, to take God's way for cure and remedy? because they prefer sense before faith, and the feeling of God's law that cleaveth to them maketh them exclude all hope by the gospel: Isa. l. 10, 'Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' The recumbency of such a soul is a notable act of faith, loving God as a friend, trusting him as an enemy. So in outward trials and difficulties, to wait for so much as God hath promised. Many trust God no further than they can see him, or have probability to expect his help, which is a limiting the holy one of Israel, Ps. lxxviii. 41, confining him to a circle of their own making. If sense be against the promise, the promise doth them no good. Now to comfort ourselves in God when all faileth: Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation;' and Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me.' To make the promise yield us that which the creature cannot, health, strength, life, peace, house and home, and maintenance for ourselves and children. When we die, and have little or nothing to leave them, and all means of subsistence are cut off and blasted, then to live, yea to grow rich by faith, as 'having nothing, yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. It is enough that God carrieth the purse for us. Many talk of living by faith, but it is when they have something in the world to live upon; as those, Isa. iv. 1, 'Only let us be called by thy name.' So in other cases, why do the vain delights, and dignities, and honours of the world so prevail with men, that all the promises of the gospel cannot reclaim them? yea, sell their birthright for one morsel of meat? Heb. xii. 16. The life of sense is lifted up above that of faith. The soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses, and knoweth what is comfortable to sense, that God is unseen, our great hopes are to come, and the flesh is importunate to be pleased: 2 Peter i. 9, 'They that want these things (that is, faith and other graces) are blind, and cannot see afar off.'

Doct. 2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven.

So the apostle sorteth these two. Here we believe in God, and there we see him as he is. As soon as we are reconciled to him, God will not admit us into his immediate presence; as Absalom, when he had leave to return, yet he could not see the king's face, 2 Sam. xiv. 24. So God causeth us to stay a while in the world ere we come before him in his heavenly temple.

1. Because now we are in our minority, and all things are by degrees carried on towards their state of perfection; as an infant doth not presently commence into the stature of a man. In the course of nature there is an orderly progress from an imperfect state to a perfect. The dispensations of God to the church, Gal. iv. And the apostle compareth our estate in glory and our estate by grace to childhood and manly age, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12. Our words, inclinations, affections, are quite

changed in the compass of a few years, so as we neither say, nor desire, nor understand anything as some years before we did. So it is with this and the next life: now our vision is very dark and imperfect, looking upon things when they are showed us as through a glass, on purpose to give us a glimpse of them; but when we come to heaven, we shall see perfectly, as we see a person or thing that is before our eyes.

2. We are now upon our trial, but then we are *in termino*, in our final state; now we are in our way, but then we are in our country. Therefore now we walk by faith, but then by sight; God would not give us our reward here. A trial cannot be made in a state of sense, but in a state of faith: we are justified by faith; we live by faith; we walk by faith. This state of faith requireth that the manner of that dispensation by which God governeth the world should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark, but a middle thing, as the daybreak or twilight is between the light of the day and the darkness of the night; that as the world is a middle place between heaven and hell, so it should have somewhat of either. If all things were too clear and liable to sense, we should not need faith; if too obscure, we should wholly lose faith; therefore it is neither night nor day, but towards the evening. If the godly should be presently admitted to their happiness, and have all things according to heart's desire, it would make religion too sensible a thing, not fit for that kind of government which God will now exercise in the world: Heb. vi. 12, 'But followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises'; and James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Every man must be tried, and approved faithful upon trial, and then God will admit him into his presence.

3. There is no congruity between our present state and the beatific vision; the place is not fit, nor the persons.

[1.] The place is not fit, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth to all, and there is a continual succession of night and day, calm and tempest, winter and summer. There is neither all evil nor only evil, not all good nor all blessing, but a mixture of either. The world to come is either all evil or all good. This is a fit place for our exercise, but not for our enjoyments. Here is the patience of the saints, but there is the reward of the saints. It is a fit place to get an interest in, but not a possession. It is God's footstool, but not his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. Now he will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He manifesteth himself to the blessed spirits as a king sitting in his royal robes upon his throne, but the church is but his foot-stool; as he filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, so the lower part with his powerful presence. This is a place wherein God will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, but the heaven of heavens he hath reserved for himself and his people, Ps. cxv. 16.

[2.] The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet enough purified

to see God, Mat. v. 8; 1 John iii. 3. Till sin be done away, which will not be till death, we are unmeet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 28. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death. We are not able to bear eternal happiness. Old bottles will not hold the new wine of glory; a mortal creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it: Mat. xii. 6, 'They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hide themselves: Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle; Moses himself, when God gave the law, trembled exceedingly.

Doct. 3. That till we have sight, it is some advantage that we have faith. There is no other way to live spiritually and in holy peace, joy, and the love of God, but by sight or faith, either by enjoyment or expectation. Therefore, sight being reserved for the other world, if we would live holily and comfortably, we must walk by faith; for our life is not maintained so much by the things which we enjoy, as the things we look for from God. If a christian had no more to look for from God than he enjoyeth here, he were of all men most miserable—not only equal, but more miserable. God's children have fewer comforts, more afflictions, and their affections to heavenly things are stronger than others. Therefore that which we look for must be our solace.

What relief will faith yield us?

1. Faith hath its sights, though not full and ravishing, as those which presence and immediate vision will yield to us. By the light of faith we see the good things which God hath promised and provided for us. We see them in the promise, though not in the performance; there is a spiritual sight which faith seeth by: John vi. 40, 'He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' Faith is a sight of Christ, such a sight as affecteth and engageth the heart, such a sight as maketh us to count all things but dung and dross. Thus 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad.' The Lord suspended the exhibition of Christ in the flesh till long after Abraham; but he got that which was far better than a bodily sight, he got a spiritual sight of him by faith. Faith hath an eagle's eye, and can see a very far off, and can draw comfort not only from what is visible for the present, but yet to come for a long time. Through all that distance of time could Abraham see Christ's day. This will in part satisfy us: Eph. i. 18, 'That the eyes of your mind being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling.' The eye of the soul or the mind is faith, without which we are blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Peter i. 9. It seeth things past, present, and to come. Past: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.' Christ was not crucified in Galatia, but in Jerusalem. It is not meant of a picture and crucifix, for in those early days they did not paint what they worshipped, but set forth to their faith. So plain and powerful is the apprehension of faith, as if he had acted his bloody passion before them, as if they had seen Christ crucified. So not only for present things, but in the other world. God: Heb. xi. 27, 'As seeing him that is invisible;' Christ at the right hand of God. Stephen saw it in vision and ecstasy, Acts

vii. 51. But every believer seeth it by faith. Things to come, as the day of judgment: Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.' A believer is certainly persuaded and suitably affected; so Abraham saw Christ's day.

2. Faith goeth not upon fallible, but certain and sure grounds. Enjoyment is more comfortable, but faith is sure; sight is better than faith, yet faith is our present strength, comfort, and support. It is our unhappiness that we walk not by sight, but it is some piece of happiness that we walk by faith; so that a believer is comforted, but not satisfied. His faith is satisfied, though his love and desire be not. For faith goeth upon good security, the security of God's promise, who cannot lie; nay, we have not only promises, but pledges which faith worketh. It is of faith, that it may be sure to all the seed. But the world thinketh nothing sure that is invisible. To carnal men, what they see not is as nothing; that the promises are but like a night-dream of mountains of gold, that all the comforts thence deduced are but fanatical illusions. Nothing so ridiculous in the world's eye as trust and dependence upon unseen comforts: Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 'All they that see me laugh me to scorn, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him.' Ungodly wits make the life of faith a sport, and a matter of laughter. They are all for the present world; present delights and present temptations have the greatest influence upon them. One little thing in hand is more than the greatest promise of better things to come: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, and embraced the present world.'

But are all things future and invisible to be questioned? Surely we do not deal equally with God and man. Country people will obey a king whom they never saw. If a man promise, they reckon much of that; they can tarry upon man's security, but count God's nothing worth. They can trade with a factor beyond seas, and trust all their estate in a man's hands whom they have never seen. And yet the word of the infallible God is of little regard and respect with them, even then when he is willing to give earnest.

3. Faith hath some enjoyment. All is not kept for the world to come. We are 'partakers of Christ,' Heb. iii. 14; partakers of the benefit, 1 Tim. vi. 2, that is, of salvation by Christ. A christian hath here by faith whatever he shall have hereafter by sight or full enjoyment. They believe it now, they receive it then; they have the beginnings now, the consummation then.

Doct. 4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth after and desireth a better estate. The reasons of this:—

1. The excellency of that better estate which is to come. It is expressed in the text by sight. Now what sight shall we have? The sight of God and Christ. Of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'We shall see him face to face, and we shall know as we are known.' And for Christ: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is;' and John xvii. 20: 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' What is this glory? The excellency of his person, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ: John xiv. 20, 'At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' The clarity of his human nature.

They shall see the Lamb's face, and be eye-witnesses of the honour which the Father puts upon him as mediator. In what manner shall we behold it? It is either ocular or mental. (1.) Ocular. Our senses have their happiness as well as our souls; there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind—'With these eyes shall I behold him,' Job xix. 26. We shall see that person that redeemed us, that nature wherein he suffered so much for us. God intendeth good to the body, and hath intrusted it with the soul, and that soul with so much grace, that he will not lose the outward cask and vessel. (2.) There is a mental vision or contemplation. The angels that are not bodily are said to 'behold the face of our heavenly Father,' Mat. xviii. 10. And when we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye; a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes; so he is invisible, Col. i. 15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part. The mind is the noblest faculty, and therefore must have its satisfaction. Well then, this is our happiness, to see God and Christ with eye and mind; ocular vision maketh way for mental, mental for fruition, and fruition for love and joy, and that accompanied with all manner of felicity. Alas! now we have dull and low conceptions of God, are little transformed by them, or weaned from fleshly and worldly lusts; could we see God in all his glory, nothing would be dreadful, nothing would be snarlingly or enticingly amiable to us any more: 1 John ii. 6, 'Whosoever sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him.' We can hardly get such a sight of God now as to prevent heinous and wilful sins, but then shall see him, and grow more holy and God-like.

2. The taste which we have by faith draweth on the soul to look and long for a full enjoyment. They are sweet and ravishing as apprehended by faith, but what will they be when enjoyed by sight? Moses' first request was, Tell me thy name; afterwards, Show me thy glory; now we scarce know his name, but then we shall see his glory. A little Christ hath told us, who hath seen God, and is with God, and is God himself, Mat. xi. 27. This little doth not satisfy, but enkindle our thirst to know more, especially if this knowledge be joined with experience, 1 Peter ii. 3. 'If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' This sets the soul a-longing for a fuller draught, and we still follow on to know more of God, Hos. vi. 3.

Doct. 5. If we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight. For God will not disappoint the soul that looketh and longeth for what he hath promised; and not only looketh and longeth, but laboureth, and suffereth all manner of inconveniency, and is willing to do anything and be anything that it may enjoy these blessed hopes. Would God court the creature into a vain hope, to his great loss and detriment? More distinctly—

1. It is faith that maketh us mind sight, or regard the things of another world. When they were persuaded of things afar off, they embraced them. There is a twofold life commonly spoken of in scripture as being in man: the animal life and the spiritual life. The animal life is the life of the soul void of grace, accommodating itself to the interests of the body:—Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit,'—as to the power and pomp of the world, height of rank and place, riches, pleasures, honours, or such things as are grateful to sense.

Our spiritual life is a principle that enableth us to live unto God, to act towards him, to make his glory our chief scope, his favour as our felicity and happiness. These two lives are governed by sense and faith—the animal by sense, the spiritual by faith; so that reason is either debased by sense, or sublimated and raised by faith. Sense carrieth and inclineth the soul to the pleasures, honours, profits of the present world, faith directeth it to the concernments of the world to come; hereunto all cometh, the distinction of the outward man and inward man. The animal life is cherished by the comforts of this life, the other by the life to come; see 1 Cor. ii. 14; ‘But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;’ so 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’ Well then, it is faith that breedeth a heavenly spirit; so that a man is made heavenly in his walkings, heavenly in his thoughts, heavenly in his supports, heavenly in his discourse, heavenly in his expectations. Faith doth not a little tincture a man, but he is deeply drenched by it, and baptized into a heavenly spirit.

2. It is faith that prepareth us for sight; for it is a kind of anticipation of blessedness, or fore-enjoyment of our everlasting estate. Therefore called, Heb. xi. 1, ‘The substance of things hoped for.’ God by faith traineth us up for sight; first we live by faith, and then by sight. Faith now serveth instead of vision, and hope of fruition; it maketh our happiness in a manner present; though it doth not affect us in the same degree that the life of glory or vision will do, yet somewhat answerable it worketh. The life of glory is inconsistent with any misery: but the life of faith enableth us to rest quietly upon God and his gracious promises as if there were no misery. Where it hath any efficacy and vigour, no allurement and terror can turn us aside, but we follow the Lord in all conditions with delight and cheerfulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the enjoyment doth, but in some measure it doth: Rom. v. 3, ‘We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ The beatifical vision transformeth us: 1 John iii. 2, ‘We shall see him as he is, and be like him.’ So doth the sight of faith: 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into his image and likeness.’ The one nullifieth sin, the other mortifieth sin.

3. It is faith giveth a right and title to the things expressed by sight; there is a charter, or certain grant of eternal life, written with Christ’s blood, sealed by the Spirit, offered by God, accepted by faith. Sealing, offered and accepted, standeth valid and ratified. The heirs of promise are described to be those who run for refuge to take hold of the hope that is before them, Heb. vi. 18, all that take sanctuary at his grace, and are resolved to pursue it in God’s way; that is, to continue patiently in well-doing, Rom. ii. 7. Faith giveth the first consent, which is after verified by a constant and unwearied pursuit after this happiness. Those who entertain a king make reckoning of his train. The winning of the field is ascribed to the general under whose conduct the battle was fought; so the promises run upon faith, which beginneth and governeth the whole business. Well then, many catch at it by a fond presumption, but have no title till faith,

and that faith no cold speculation and dead opinion about heaven, but a lively, working faith. Certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we do not believe it, if our most industrious care, and serious thoughts, and constant and active endeavours be not turned into this channel, or if we do not believe it so as to prize it, and prize it so as to seek after it, and seek after it in the first place, Mat. vi. 33. This must be our great scope—do all things to eternal ends: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’

Doct. 6. Those who have faith must walk by it; for faith is here considered as working and putting forth itself. We walk, that is, we live, for in the dialect of the Hebrews this life is a walk; *vitam nostram componimus*, we must govern and direct our lives by the power and influence of faith. It is not enough to have faith, but we must walk by it; our whole conversation is carried on and influenced by faith, and by the Spirit of God on Christ’s part: Gal. ii. 20, ‘I live by the faith of the Son of God;’ a lively faith. There living by faith is spoken of as it respecteth the principle of the spiritual life; here walking by faith as the scope and end of it: there, as we derive virtue from Christ; here, as we press on to heaven, in the practice of holiness. In short, walking noteth a progress, and passing on from one place to another, through a straight and beaten way which lieth between both. So we pass on from the earthly state to the heavenly by the power and influence of our way; our way is through all conditions we are appointed unto, and through all duties required of us.

1. Through all conditions. By honour and dishonour, evil report and good report, afflictions, prosperities, 2 Cor. vi. 4–8. Whether despised or countenanced, still minding our great journey to heaven. Faith is necessary for all, that the evil be not a discouragement, nor the good a snare. Evil: Rom. viii. 18, ‘For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.’ Good: 2 Tim. iv. 10, ‘For Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.’

2. All duties required of us. That we still keep a good conscience towards God and towards man, Acts xxiv. 15, 16, in this faith and hope.

Reasons—

1. Walking by faith maketh a man sincere, because he expecteth his reward from God only, though no man observe him, no man commend him: Mat. vi. 6, ‘Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.’ Yea, though all men hate him and condemn him: Mat. v. 11, 12, ‘Blessed are you when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name’s sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.’ Now this is true sincerity, when we make God alone our paymaster, and count his rewards enough to repair our losses and repay our cost.

2. It maketh a man vigorous and lively. When we consider at the end of our work there is a life of endless joys to be possessed in heaven with God, that we shall never repent of the labour and pain

that we have taken in the spiritual life: 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;’ Phil. iii. 14, ‘I press towards the mark, because of the high prize of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.’ The thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward do add spirits to the runner.

3. It maketh a man watchful, that he be not corrupted with the delights of sense, which are apt to call back our thoughts, to interrupt our affections, to divert us from our work, and quench our zeal. Now one that walks by faith can compare his eternal happiness with these transitory pleasures which will soon have an end, and everlastingly forsake those miserable souls who were deluded by them. As Moses: Heb. xi. 24, 25, ‘By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.’

4. Walking by faith will make a man self-denying; for, having heaven in his eye, he knoweth that he cannot be a loser by God: Mark x. 21, ‘Forsake all that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;’ so vers. 29, 30, ‘Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, but he shall receive an hundred-fold.’

5. Walking by faith maketh a man comfortable and confident; a believer is encouraged in all his duty, emboldened in his conflicts, comforted in all his sufferings. The quieting or emboldening the soul is the great work of faith, or trust in God’s fidelity. A promise to him is more than all the visible things on earth, or sensible objects in the world; it can do more with him to make him forsake all earthly pleasures, possessions, and hopes: Ps. lvi. 4, ‘In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me;’ so Paul: Acts xx. 24, ‘But none of those things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may fulfil my course with joy. Save the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me’—did wait for him everywhere. I make no reckoning of these things. It maketh us constant. Have ye fixed upon these hopes with so great deliberation, and will you draw back, and slack in the prosecution of them? Have you gone so far in the way to heaven, and do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind, Heb. x. 39. The apostle saith, Phil. iii. 13, ‘I forget the things which are behind, reaching forth unto the things which are before.’ The world and the flesh are things behind us; we turned our backs upon them when we first looked after heavenly things. Heaven and remaining duties are the things before us; if we lose our crown, we lose ourselves for ever.

Use, Is to show the advantage the people of God have above the carnal and unregenerate. The people of God walk by faith, against the present want of sight. How do the world walk? Not by faith, they have it not; nor by the sight of heaven, for they are not there, and so continuing never shall be there. So they have neither faith nor sight; what do they live by, then? They live by sense and by fancy:

by sense as to the present world ; and they live by fancy and vain conceit as to the world to come. Live in their sins and vain pleasures, and yet hope to be saved. Here they walk by sight, but not such a sight as the apostle meaneth ; they must have something in the view of sense—lands, honours, pleasures ; and when these are out of sight, they are in darkness, and have nothing to live upon. But now a christian is never at a loss, let his condition be what it will. Suppose God should bring him so low and bare that he hath no estate to live on, no house to dwell in, yet he hath an inheritance in the promises : Ps. exix. 111, ‘ Thy testimonies I have taken for an heritage for ever ; ’ and ‘ God is his habitation,’ Ps. xc. 1. A full heap in his own keeping is not such a supply to him as God’s all-sufficiency, Gen. xvii. 1. That is his storehouse. But his great happiness is in the other world ; there is all his hope and his desire, and he looketh upon other promises only in order to that.

SERMON XI.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.—2 COR. v. 8.

In this verse the apostle repeateth what he had said verse 6, with some amplification. Here take notice of two things—

1. His confidence of sight, or of a blessed condition to come—*θαρροῦμεν, We are confident, I say.*

2. His preference or esteem of sight, or of that blessed condition before the present estate—*εὐδοκούμεν μᾶλλον, And willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* Where two things—

[1.] What he was willing to quit—‘the body.’ We are willing (*ἐκδημῆσαι*) to travel out of the body.

[2.] What he did choose and prefer—*ἐνδημῆσαι*, to be at home with the Lord, to dwell in the same house with the Lord Christ ; this he preferred before remaining in the body.

Let us a little explain these circumstances.

First, His confidence of sight to be had at length. ‘We are confident, I say.’ There is a twofold confidence—(1.) The confidence of faith ; (2.) The confidence of assurance, or of our own interest. Both are of regard here. (1.) Faith in part produceth this willingness to go out of the body, and enjoy the heavenly life, and comfortably to leave the time and means thereof to God. Faith, where it is in any vigour, begets in those that live by it a holy boldness, whereby we dare undertake anything for God, not fearing the power and greatness of any creature ; no, not death itself. (2.) assurance of our own interest doth much more heighten this confidence and holy boldness when we know assuredly that our end shall be glorious, and that when we depart out of the body, we shall be present with the Lord. The hope of our salvation is not uncertain.

Secondly, His preferring and choosing the future estate before the present; *εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον*, we approve it, we like it better: Rom. xv. 26, ‘It hath pleased them of Macedonia;’ and ver. 27, ‘It hath pleased them verily,’ *εὐδόκησε*; the same word also, Mat. xvii. 3. So here we make choice rather, and are infinitely better pleased to leave this body behind us here, and to go out and die, that by this means we may come to our home and bliss in heaven. So that faith doth not only shake off the fear of death, but enkindle in us a holy desire of it; for what we render ‘and willing,’ is, are more pleased or better pleased.

The points are four—

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present with the Lord.
2. That we are present with the Lord as soon as the soul flitteth out of the body.
3. That this state is chosen by the saints as more pleasing to them than to dwell in the body.
4. This will, desire, and choice cometh from a confidence of the reality of a better estate, and our own interest in it.

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present with the Lord. This hath been in part touched on in ver. 6; I shall only add a few considerations. Surely it must needs be so; because this is the felicity denied to wicked men, but promised and granted to the godly. Denied to wicked men: John vii. 34, ‘Where I am, thither ye cannot come;’ that is, so living, and so dying, they have no leave, no grant to be there where Christ is; paradise is closed up against them, but it is opened to God’s faithful servants by the promises of the gospel: John xii. 26, ‘There where I am, there shall my servant be.’ Christ will not be ever in heaven without us. As Joseph brought his brethren to Pharaoh, so Christ will bring us to God. Wicked men desire not Christ’s company in this life, and therefore they are justly secluded from coming where he is; but the godly are trained up to look and long and wait for this when they shall come before God.

Reasons.—(1.) Because then we shall have sight and immediate communion with him, and our happiness floweth from him without the intervention of any means: Acts iii. 19, ‘Days of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;’ compare it with 2 Thes. i. 9, ‘The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.’ Eternal happiness is granted to the elect by the full revelation of Christ’s face, Rev. xxii. 4. ‘They shall see his face.’ And the very look and face of Christ is the cause of vengeance on the wicked: Rev. vi. 16, ‘They shall say unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throue, and the wrath of the Lamb.’ Christ’s face produceth powerful effects, either in a way of grace or punishment. In the days of his flesh we had a proof of it both ways. The Lord looked upon Peter, and that melted his heart, Luke xxii. 61. And when the high priest’s servants came to attack him: John xviii. 6, ‘He looked upon him, and said, I am he. And they went backward, and fell to the ground.’ But surely in heaven

we shall need no more to make us happy than once to see the face of Christ—‘In thy presence’ (or in thy face) ‘is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore,’ Ps. xvi. 11. The fruition of God’s immediate presence is not like the joys of the world, which can neither feed nor fill a man; but in seeing him we shall have full content and complete felicity. The children of God long to see God in his ordinances : Ps. xxvii. 4, ‘One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple.’ There is but one thing David was solicitous about, and importunate for in his prayers ; what was this one thing ? Not that he might be settled in his regal throne, which lie seemeth not yet to be when that psalm was penned (for the Septuagint in title add to what appeareth in our Bibles πρὸ τοῦ χρισθῆναι, before he was anointed), but that he might enjoy the sweet pleasures of daily and frequent converse with God, that he might behold the beauty of the Lord ; so Ps. xlvi. 2, ‘My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ?’ David was impatient of being debarred from the presence of God. Now, if there be so great and so longing a desire to see God in these glasses, wherein so little of his glory is seen with any comfort and satisfaction, how much more to see him immediately, and face to face ? If that glimpse which God now vouchsafeth be so glorious, what will it be when he shall fully show himself to his people face to face.

(2.) Because then we shall converse with him without impediment and distraction. Here bodily necessities take up the far greatest part of our time : Luke x. 41, ‘Thou art cumbered about many things, but one thing is necessary.’ The present life requireth many ministries and services at our hands. Besides sinful distractions, there are many worldly occasions to divert us ; but then it is our work and our wages to see God, our business and blessedness to study divinity in the Lamb’s face : John xvii. 24, ‘That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.’ It is our constant work in heaven to admire and adore God in Christ. The difficulties and distractions are removed, and that mass of flesh which we now carry about us will be then no clog to us : 1 Cor. vi. 13, ‘Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them.’ Nature calleth for them, and in this life there is an absolute necessity of them, but the necessity and use shall cease ; the spiritual body will need no other supplies, and put us upon no other employments, than the loving, pleasing, and serving of God. All the things which we shall see will leave more sweet, enlivening, and powerful impressions on us than possibly now they can, because we shall understand them better, and have more leisure to attend upon them.

(3.) Our presence with him shall be perpetual. We shall meet never to part more : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ‘We shall be for ever present with the Lord.’ Wicked men shall see Christ, for they must appear before his tribunal ; but they shall see him to their confusion : Rev. i. 7, ‘Every eye shall see him, and they that have pierced him shall wail because of him.’ But the godly shall see him to their consolation : Job xix. 26, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and with these eyes

I shall see him.' The one shall see him as their judge, the other as their saviour; but the chiefest difference is, the one shall see him for a while, and then be banished out of his presence: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed.' There is a dispute whither *pœna damni* or *pœna sensus* be the greatest; I cannot determine such nice points. The sense of pain is from the wrath of God; conscience reflecteth upon our loss; the agents are not to be compared. Yet on the other side the object is greater, the thing lost is God himself; it is the creature that is pained. But I am sure the loss will be much greater than now we apprehend it to be. For the present we do not value communion with Christ, we have other things wherewith to entertain our souls; there are no pleasures of the flesh to abate and divert the sense of our loss; nothing left but the vexing remembrance of our own folly and perverse choice, which will torment us for ever; but now to be received into Christ's presence and ever abide with him, how great is the happiness!

(4.) The person whom we see, and with whom we be present, he is our best friend. It is with Jesus Christ, who is the life of our lives, and the whole felicity of his people; as long as the church is without him, she cannot take full contentment. What doth the spouse esteem, when she seeth him not to whom she is espoused? What can delight the wife when the husband is absent? What comfort when they want the presence of Christ, to whom their souls cleave? When the church is here upon earth, she heareth much of Christ; he is evidently set forth before their eyes in the word and sacraments, but we do not see him face to face, we do not enjoy his presence nor his immediate embraces. The church is left upon earth, but Christ is received into heaven with his Father; we believe in him now, rejoice in him now, when we see him not, 1 Peter i. 8. But how shall we love him when we see him, and see him glorious in our nature, and enjoy him by seeing! Hearsay and report could not convey such a knowledge and report as this personal experience, as they said, John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but we have seen him ourselves.' Here is but a sight at second hand, as the Queen of Sheba: 1 Kings x. 17, 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land of thine acts, and thy wisdom, but when I came, and mine eyes had seen it, the half was not told me.' We believe the report of Christ in the word; but when we come to see him, we shall find that prophecy was but in part, the one half was not told us; however sight is the more precious, because faith went before; we believed him a saviour, and now we find him to be so. How glad was Simeon when he had Christ in his arms: Luke ii. 29, 30, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

(5.) The place and the company, where we shall be present with him. The place is glorious; the heaven of heavens must contain him, Acts iii. 24. The earth is not a fit place for his glorified body, nor for us to converse with him in his glorified estate. We shall be there where God dwelleth, and where he hath designed to manifest himself to his people, and amongst the servants of the Lord shall we ever remain: Heb. xii. 22, 23, 'To an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and the spirits of just men

made perfect.' A choice company, picked and chosen out of the world to be objects of his grace. In this council of souls we are to abide for ever.

Use. Let us often think of this blessed estate; what it is to be present with the Lord, among his holy ones, to be called to heaven as witnesses of his glory. The Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, 1 Kings x. 8, 'Happy are the men that stand in thy presence.' They that stand before the Lord, and see his glory, are much more happy. Zaccheus, being a little man, pressed to see Christ upon earth, and got upon a sycamore tree. The wise men came from the east to see him in his cradle. It is our burden in the world that the veil of the flesh, and the clouds of heaven, interpose between us and Christ, that there is a great gulf between us and him, which cannot be passed but by death. That Christ is at a distance, therefore our enemies so often ask us, 'Where is your God?' But then when we are in his arms, then we can say, Here he is; here is he whom we loved; here is he in whom we trusted. Then our Redeemer shall be ever before our eyes, to remember us of the grace purchased for us; and we are as near him as possibly we can be; we dwell in his family, and abide in his house. David envied the swallows that had their nests about the tabernacle. He telleth us, Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' Now you shall be always before the throne, and look upon Jesus so as to live on him. This sight shall ravish and content your hearts. The three children walked comfortably in the fiery furnace, because there was a fourth there, one that was as the Son of God. If a fiery furnace be a comfortable place when Christ is there, what will heaven be when Christ, and we shall be there to all eternity? Again, this presence maketh way for enjoyment. It is not a naked sight and speculation; we are co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. We shall be like him, live in the same state, participate of the same glory. Servants may stand in the presence of princes, but they do not make their followers their fellows and consorts with them in the same glory. Solomon could only show his glory to the Queen of Sheba, but Christ giveth it us to be enjoyed: Luke xxii. 30, 'Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' The greatest love that David could show his friends, was to admit them to his table: 2 Sam. ix. 7, 'Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually,' said he to Mephibosheth; and so to Barzillai. 'He put him upon his own mule, and caused him to sit upon his throne,' 1 Kings i. 33, 35. Thus Christ dealeth with us; we sit upon his throne, we are feasted at his table with unmixed delights. In how much better condition are we than Adam! Adam was in Paradise, we in heaven; Adam was there among the beasts of the earth, we with God and his holy angels; Adam was thrown out of Paradise, we never out of heaven. It is no matter if the world leave us not a room to live in among them; they cast us out many times, but Christ will take us to himself. Again, if this presence of Christ be no small part of our happiness, let us more delight in it. We enjoy his presence in the ordinances; this is to begin heaven upon earth. Therefore let us begin our familiarity here.

Doct. 2. That we are presently with the Lord as soon as the soul flieth out of the body.

This is one of the plainest texts to prove that separated souls, as soon as they are out of the body, do enjoy bliss and glory. There are a sort of men in the world who are so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come, either questioning the immortality of the soul, or else, which is a step to it, asserting the sleep of it; and all because they so fancy it to be tied to the body, as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations without it. Those that deny the being of the soul, or the abiding of it after the body is dissolved, I shall not handle that now; but to those that grant the abiding of the soul, but in a deep sleep, without any sense and feeling of good or evil, I must show the falsehood of this opinion, or else all that I shall say will be to no purpose. Therefore I shall handle these three things—

1. That the soul is distinct from the body.
2. That the soul can live and exercise its operations apart from the body.

3. That the souls of the saints actually do so.

1. That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason and experience. In scripture we read, that when man's body was organised and framed, 'God breathed into him the spirit of life,' Gen. ii. 7.

[1.] The life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh; that is proportioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones and sinews. And this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as implieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or opposing: 'In him was life, and that life was the light of men,' John i. 4. It doth not only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its own pleasure—a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body in its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being divided into parts, as the body is, for it is a spirit, not created of matter, as the body was. The body was formed out of the dust of the ground, and therefore it can be resolved into its original, but the spirit was immediately created by God out of nothing. Therefore the scripture saith, Eccles. xii. 7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' Where the body is dust in its composition, it shall be dust in its dissolution. There is described the first and last condition of the body, in regard of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind of its being. It is a spirit, or an immaterial substance; its author, God, gave it; he framed the body too, but not so immediately in ordinary generation. And our natural fathers are distinguished from the Father of our spirits, Heb. xii. 9. And by its disposal; when the body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God that gave it. When the material and passive part is separated from that inward and active principle of its motions, the scripture telleth you what becometh of the one and the other. The material part is resolved to dust again, but the spirit returneth to God. So the saints resign it: Acts vii. 59, 'And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

[2.] It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by outward means, and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported without means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself.

The body is patched up with daily supplies from without. As it was made out of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth, Ps. civ. 14, and its clothing too ; but the soul needeth not these things.

[3.] It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations of the soul wholly independent on matter, as understanding and willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies ; and there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear ; nay, it understands not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies. And it can reflect upon itself ; therefore it hath operations proper and peculiar to itself ; so that it doth not depend on the body.

[4.] It is distinct from the body as to weakness and perfection, as to pleasure and pain.

(1.) As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and decayeth not with the body ; when the body droopeth and languisheth, the soul is well and jocund—yea, better than it was before. There are distinct periods of time, beyond which it is impossible to add a cubit or hair's-breadth to one's stature. But the soul is ever growing forward to its perfection ; and multitude of years, though they bring on much weakness, yet increase wisdom, Job xxxii. 7. Yea, the soul is strongest when weakest ; dying christians have manifested the highest excellency under bodily infirmities, and when least of the life of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace : 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘For though the outward man perish, the inner man is renewed day by day.’

(2.) As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joys of the body are gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged ; as when the bodies of the martyrs were on the rack under torturings, their souls have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolation, 2 Cor. i. 5, ‘Also aboundeth by Christ.’ When their flesh is scorched, their souls are refreshed.

[5.] They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it. Christ hath commanded us to take ‘no thought for the body,’ Mat. vi. 25 ; but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul ; rather the contrary : Deut. iv. 9, ‘Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.’ The great miscarriage of men is because they pamper their bodies and neglect their souls, all their care is to keep their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

2. The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live and exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many arguments from reason to prove it, but let us consider scripture, which should be reason enough to christians. That it can do so appeareth by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, ‘I knew a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, such an one carried up to the third heaven.’ If Paul had been of this opinion, that the soul being separated from the body is void of all sense, he must then have known certainly that his soul remained in his body, during this rapture, because, according to

this supposition, in that state alone could he see and hear those things which he saw and heard. And that argument is not contemptible to prove the possibility, where among other things it is said, death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Therefore the soul liveth in a state to enjoy him, in a sense of his love to us, and our love to him.

3. That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from the body, but actually do so, and are presently with the Lord as soon as they flit out of the body. This I shall prove from these particulars taken from scripture.

[1.] From Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' This was said to the penitent thief, and what was said to him, will be accomplished in all the faithful; for what Christ promiseth to him, he promiseth it to him as a penitent believer, and what belongeth to one convert belongeth to all in a like case. Therefore if his soul in the very day of his death were translated into paradise, ours will be also. Now paradise is either the earthly or the heavenly; not the first, which is nowhere extant, being defaced by the flood. If it were in being, what have separate souls to do there? That was a fit place for Adam in innocency, who had a body and a soul, and was to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. By paradise is meant heaven, whither Paul was rapt in soul, which he called both paradise and the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 4. And there all the faithful are when once they have passed the pikes, and have overcome the temptations of the present world: Rev. ii. 7, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' Well then, there the thief was not in regard of his body, which was disposed of as men pleased, but his soul. And when should he be there? This day. It was not a blessedness to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years afterwards. It is an answer to his *quando*. The penitent thief desired when he came into his kingdom he would remember him; Christ sheweth he would not defer his hope for so long a time, but his desire should be accomplished that day; it is not adjourned to many days, months, or years, but this day. Thou shalt presently enjoy thy desire.

[2.] The second place is: Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is to be in heaven, for there 'Christ is at the right hand of God,' Col. iii. 1. The apostle speaketh not this in regard of his body, for that could not be presently upon his dissolution, till it was raised up at the last day, but in regard of his soul. This state that his soul was admitted into, was much more better if compared with the estate it enjoyed in this life, yea, though you take in the end and use of life; yet his being with Christ upon his dissolution, was more eligible, and to be preferred before it. Is it not better, you will say, to remain here and serve God, than to depart hence? It were so, if the soul were in a state wherein we neither know nor love Christ; what profit would it be to be with the Lord, and not enjoy his company? Present knowledge, services, tastes, experiences, are better than a stupid lethargy and sleepy estate, without all understanding and will. It is better to a gracious man to wake than to sleep, to be hard at work for God than to be idle and do

nothing, to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless condition ; it would be far worse with Paul to have his body rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God, if this were true. What is that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice ? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings ? God's people, who have totally resigned themselves to God, are wont to prefer and value their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with great labours and sufferings, before their own ease. Surely Paul would never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. The most afflicted condition with God's presence is sweeter to his people than the greatest contentments with his absence ; if thou art not with us, carry us not hence. Better tarry with God in the wilderness than live in Canaan without him. Surely it were absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate where we feel the love of God and Christ in our souls, which is unspeakable and glorious, for a condition wherein there is no taste nor sense.

[3.] The next place is, 1 Peter iii. 19, 'By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' There are many souls of men and women who once slighted the Lord's grace, and are now in hell as in a prison. Their souls do not go to nothing, nor die as their bodies, but as soon as they are separated from the body, go to their place and state of torment, ἐν φυλακῇ, the place of their everlasting imprisonment. So Luke xvi. 23, 24, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.' God is not more prone to punish than to reward ; if the wicked be in their final estate as soon as they die, the saints are in their happiness presently upon their dissolution. On the other side, Heb. xii, 22, 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' The souls of men, unclothed, and divested of their bodies, to these come. How could these things be said if they did lie only in a dull sleep, without any life, sight, joy, or any act of love to God ? Present sleep it is a burden to the saints, as it is an interruption to their service, though a necessary refreshment to their bodies.

[4.] That argument also proves it, Col. i. 20, 'That Christ by the blood of his cross hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon the earth. It cannot be said of the elect angels, who never sinned, and therefore were never reconciled, *Se nunquam cum matre in gratiam rediisse, &c.*, but only confirmed in grace, and put beyond all reach and possibility of sinning ; and so the things in heaven which are reconciled are the souls of the godly, who departed in the faith.

[5.] That place also proveth it, Luke xx. 37, 38, 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live to him.' The Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul as well as the resurrection of the body, and said that there was no state of life after this. Christ disproveth both by a notable argument—'I am the

God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living ; for they all live to him.' The words were spoken by Moses after their deceasing ; not *I was*, but *I am* the God of Abraham. God said after their decease that he was still their God ; and therefore those that are departed out of the world live another life. The souls of the just are already in the hands of God, and their bodies are sure to be raised up and united to them by the power of God.

[6.] My next place shall be, Luke xvi. 9, 'And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' What is that time of failing ? It is not meant of condemnation in the judgment, for there is no escaping or reversing that sentence ; therefore it is meant of the hour of death : then are we received into everlasting habitations, and our everlasting habitation is heaven.

[7.] And lastly, from Luke xvi. 22, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' By the bosom of Abraham is meant heaven, and hell is opposed to it ; and it is explained, 'he is comforted, but thou art tormented.' Lying in the bosom is a feast gesture, as Mat. viii. 11, a greater expression of love, for the most beloved disciple lay in the bosom of the principal person at the feast ; and Mat. xiii. 43, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' Basil telleth us of the forty martyrs exposed naked in a cold frosty night, and to be burned next day, that they comforted one another with this consideration :—Cold is the night, but the bosom of Abraham is warm and comfortable ; it is but a night's enduring, and we shall feel no more cold, but be happy for evermore. Well then, here is proof such as is fit in the case. In things future we are doubtful, and of the state of the soul we are in a great measure ignorant ; therefore God hath discovered these things to us in his word.

Use 1. Well then, here is great comfort for those that are now hard at work for God ; the time of your refreshing and ease is at hand.

2. To support us against the terrors of death. In martyrdom, if you are slain, the sword is but a key to open the door, that you may presently be with Christ ; if strangled, the animal life is put out that the heavenly may begin ; if burnt, it is going to heaven in a fiery chariot. In the general, 'death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ,' Rom. viii. 38, 39. Though we die, the soul is capable of loving God, and being beloved by him.

3. To support us under the pains of sickness. It is but enduring pain a little longer, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you shall be with God. Angels will bring you to Christ, and Christ present you to God, and then you shall enjoy an eternal rest.

4. Here is comfort to the dying. Command your souls to God ; as Stephen; Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' There is a redeemer ready to receive you ; heaven will be your residence, and God will be your happiness and portion for ever.

Doct. 3. This presence with the Lord is earnestly desired and chosen by the saints, as far more pleasing to them than remaining in the body.

1. The thing itself is true, that presence with the Lord is infinitely much better than remaining in the body; and will abundantly recompense the absence from it. God's gracious presence is better than life bodily: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' It is that which giveth a value to life itself, without which it were little worth. Alas! what should we do with human nature, or a rational soul, if it were not capable of loving, knowing, and enjoying God? What! employ it only to cater for the body? That is to act but as an higher and wiser sort of beast. Life is no life without God; then we do live when we live to him, enjoy him and his love. Now if his gracious presence is more worth than life, what then is his glorious presence? Phil. i. 21, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' A christian loseth nothing by death, but he gaineth abundantly more by his being present with Christ. And ver. 23, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.' There is no proportion between the choicest contentments which we attain unto here, even those which are spiritual, and that blessed estate which the saints enjoy hereafter. Now there being such a disproportion in the things themselves, there should be in our desires and our choice; for we are to judge and be affected according to the nature or worth of things, otherwise we act not only irrationally, but feignedly and hypocritically, shunning that by all means which we profess to be our happiness.

2. He is not a true christian that doth not love Christ more than his own body, and his own life, or any worldly thing whatsoever. It is one of Christ's conditions, Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, brothers and sisters, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' All things must be trampled upon for Christ's sake, or else his heart is not sincere with him. A choosing earth before heaven, preferring present things before Christ, a fixing our happiness here, these things are contrary to the integrity of our covenanting with God. Our valuation of the presence of Christ should be so high, and our affection to it so great, that we should not exchange our title to it, or hopes of it, for any worldly good whatsoever. If God would give thee thy health and wealth upon earth, then thou wouldest look for no other happiness; this is naught.

3. As he cannot be a true and sound christian, so neither discharge the duties of a christian, who is not of this frame and constitution of spirit.

[1.] Not venture his life for Christ: Heb. xii. 4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin;' unless willing rather to be with the Lord than in the body.

[2.] Not employ his life for Christ, nor live in order to eternity, unless he hath been kept looking and longing for this happy change: Gen. xlix. 19, 'Lord, I have waited for thy salvation.' As if all his lifetime he had been waiting for this. None live the heavenly life but those that look upon it as better than the worldly, and accordingly wait and prepare for it; it is the end sweeteneth the means.

[3.] Nor lay down nor yield up his life with comfort. The very fore-thoughts of their change are grievous to most men, because they

are not willing rather to be with Christ than in the body ; and so they move from that which they speculatively call their blessedness, and count themselves undone when they come to enjoy.

[4.] There are many things to invite us to desire presence with Christ, as there are many things to show us why we are not satisfied with remaining in the body. While we remain in the body we dwell in an evil world, Gal. i. 4, which is a place of sins, snares, and troubles. But of this, see ver. 4 of this chapter.

Use. Let us all be of this temper and frame of spirit, willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Almost all will prefer the life to come, in words, when indeed they utterly neglect it, and prefer the fleshly pleasures of this life before it, cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet set their hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. God's children do not often enough compare the difference between being present with the body, and being present with the Lord ; they root here too much. The desire of this life is very natural to us ; but yet if it withdraweth us from these heavenly good things, and weakeneth our esteem of the true life, it should be curbed and mortified, and reduced into its due order and place. Therefore it is very necessary that we should often revive these thoughts, and rightly judge of the present and future life, and use earthly good things piously, as long as it pleaseth God to keep us here ; but still to be mindful of home, and to keep our hearts in a constant breathing after heavenly things.

Two things I shall press upon you—

1. Use the pleasures of the bodily life more sparingly.
2. Let your love to Christ be more strong and more earnest.

1. Use the pleasures of the bodily life more sparingly. They that have too great a care and love to the body, neglect their souls, and disable themselves for these heavenly desires and motions ; they cannot act them in prayer : 1 Peter iv. 7, ‘Be sober, and watch unto prayer.’ And they lie open to Satan’s temptations : 1 Peter v. 8, ‘For your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.’ Therefore, unless there be a great deal of moderation, and a spare meddling of earthly delights, they are indisposed for the christian warfare : 1 Thes. v. 8, ‘Let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love.’ We cannot exercise faith and love with any liveliness, nor expect the happiness of the world to come : 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end.’ Whilst we hire out our reason to the service of lust and appetite, and glut ourselves with the delights of the flesh and worldly pomp, as dainty fare, costly apparel, sports, plays, and gaming, there is a strange oblivion and deadness growtheth upon our hearts as to heavenly things. A christian looketh for days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord ; but these must have their refreshings here. The drunkard seeketh his refreshing in pleasing his palate ; the idle man is loth to be put to work, he would have his rest here ; the vain, they must have their senses tickled and pleased ; pomp and vanity, and sports and pastimes, are the great business and pleasure of most men’s lives.

2. Let your love to Christ be stronger and more earnest ; for

where love is, we desire union and presence. It is but a pretence of love where we aim not at the nearest conjunction that may be. If we love our friend, his presence is comfortable, his absence troublesome; as Delilah said to Samson, ‘How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy spirit is not with me?’ Judges xvi. 15. If we love one, we desire to be with him.

Doct. 4. That this will and choice cometh from confidence of a better estate, and our own interest in it.

For while the soul doubteth of the thing, or of our enjoying it, we shall desire the continuance of our earthly happiness, rather than to depart out of the body with fears of going to hell.

1. It is faith that breedeth hope, which is a longing and desirous expectation. For it is the substance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1.

2. It is assurance that doth increase it. It is easy to convince men that heaven is the only happiness; but is it thy happiness? Though the knowledge of excellency and suitableness may stir up that love which worketh by degrees, yet there must be the knowledge of our interest to set a-work our complacency and delight. We cannot so delightfully and cheerfully expect our change till our title be somewhat cleared. It is sad with a man that is uncertain whither he is a-going.

Use. Let us labour for this confidence, a holy and well-built confidence. For he is not in the best condition that hath least trouble about his everlasting estate, but he that hath least cause. Many that have been confident of their integrity and safety have miscarried for ever; yea, that have had a great name in the church: Mat. vii. 22, ‘Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done wonderful things;’ yet Christ saith, ‘I know you not,’ in the next verse. And Luke xiii. 25, 26, ‘When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught us in our streets.’ So Prov. xiv. 12, ‘There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.’ The foolish virgins, Mat. xxv., made full account to enter into the nuptial chamber, but were shut out. Many now in hell little thought of coming thither, those not only of the brutish multitude, but of great note, that have lived in the light of the gospel, and heard the difference between the wicked and the godly.

2. There is no true confidence but what groweth out of a constant, uniform, self-denying obedience: Mat. vii. 21, ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven;’ and 1 John iii. 18, ‘My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth;’ and Rom. viii. 5—7.

SERMON XII.

Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.—2 Cor. v. 9.

THIS verse containeth a practical inference out of the whole foregoing discourse. That which was before spoken may be reduced to these three heads—

1. A certain knowledge and confidence of a blessed estate; we know, and we are always confident.

2. An earnest desire, expressed by groans and vehement longings after it.

3. A willingness and holy boldness to venture upon death itself upon this hope. Now these do infer one another. Because we know, we desire; because we desire this happy estate, we are willing rather, &c. So they all infer this effect mentioned in the text. We labour because we know, we labour because we desire, we labour because we are willing rather; yea, this effect feedeth and maintaineth all the former dispositions in life and vigour, and also evidenceth the sincerity of them. Surely we know we desire; we are willing rather if in life; in death we study to approve ourselves to God ‘Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent,’ &c.

This verse containeth a christian’s scope and a christian’s work:—

1. His scope, *To be accepted with God.*

2. His work, *We labour, that whether present or absent.*

1. His scope. The scope of the christian life is to approve ourselves to God; while we are present in the body to do things pleasing in his sight: Col. i. 10, ‘That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing;’ and 1 Thes. iv. 1, ‘As ye have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more;’ when absent or gone out of the body, that we may be found in a state of well-pleasedness and acceptation: 2 Peter iii. 14, ‘Be found of him in peace;’ Heb. xi. 5, ‘He had this testimony, that he pleased God.’ Our great inquiry is whether our state be pleasing or displeasing to him, and our great aim is that it may be pleasing.

2. A christian’s work, ‘We labour, that whether present or absent.’ There take notice of two things;—

[1.] Their earnest and assiduous diligence. In the word, φιλοτιμούμεθα, we are ambitious of this honour; the word is used in two other scriptures: Rom. xv. 20, ‘Striving to preach the gospel where Christ was not named;’ and 1 Thes. iv. 11, ‘Study to be quiet.’ Affect this honour, or pursue after it, as men do after preferment, honours, and dignities in the world. So that this word is three ways rendered, *labour, strive, study.* Ambition mightily prevaleth with sensual men, and maketh them restless and unwearied in their pursuits, till they get at top. This is the holy and laudable ambition of a christian, to stand right in the favour of God, and be accepted with him at the last.

[2.] The several states in which this design must be carried on—‘Whether present or absent.’ Whether we be at home, and continue

in this earthly body of ours, or whether we be gone out of the body, the happiness of this world and the next lieth in our acceptance with God. Living and dying, a christian must see that he be in a state of well-pleasing, Rom. xiv. 7, 8. Our hearts are pretty well at ease while we are in the body, if we may know that we are accepted of God. However, that must be our scope; now it must be the design of our obedience, and hereafter it will be the grounds of our reward; it will be our solace in our pilgrimage, and it will be our happiness when we die and go out of the body, if Christ will own us at the last.

D&c. The great ambition, design and endeavour of a true Christian is, that, living and dying, he may be such as God may like and well approve of.

1. I shall give you the emphasis of this point as it lieth in the text.
2. Some reasons of the point.

First. Let me illustrate this point as it lieth in this scripture. Mark, this must be our great design and scope, we must not only do things which are *Deo grata*, acceptable to God for the matter, but this must be our fixed end and scope which we must propound to ourselves. Christianity and true godliness are set forth in scripture by three things. Sometimes by the internal principle of it—the Spirit of God, or ‘the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i. 4, or the ‘seed of God abiding in us,’ 1 John iii. 9. Sometimes by the intention of the true end, which is the pleasing of God, and the fruition of God with Christ and his blessed ones for ever in heaven, when the heart is set upon that: Mat. vi. 20, 21, ‘But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;’ and 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ Sometimes by the reception of the true rule, when that is engrrafted in our hearts, and so impressed upon our hearts that it cannot be defaced: Heb. viii. 10, ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;’ and Ps. xxxvii. 31, ‘The law of God is in my heart.’ I now am to speak of the second, which is the true aim, scope and tendency of the life of godliness, or of those who profess faith in Christ, namely, that we may be so approved of God that we may enjoy him for ever among his blessed ones. I shall prove it by three arguments, that this must be our constant scope, taken from the many advantages which redound to us thereby.

1. We cannot be sincere unless this be our great aim and scope, that we may approve ourselves to God. One main difference between the sincere and the hypocrite is in the end and scope. The one seeketh the approbation of men, and the other the approbation of God; the one is fleshly wisdom, the other godly simplicity and sincerity, 2 Cor. i. 12; the one acts to be seen of men, the other maketh God his witness, approver and judge. So elsewhere the spiritual life is negatively a not living to ourselves, and positively a living to God, and both carried on by the power and influence of a holy and sincere love to God: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ‘For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' Love acteth most purely for God whilst it designeth him as the end of all things ; our study to please, desire to enjoy him, keepeth us upright. The more fixed our end is, and the more we renew the intention of it, and daily prosecute it, the more sincere we are. If we keep the right mark in our eye it maketh us level right, but he that mistaketh his end, is out of the way in the first step he taketh, and all his acts are but acts of sin, error and folly, how splendid soever the matter or manner of the action may represent it to vulgar appearance ; suppose praying or preaching out of envy, or alms for vain-glory : Phil. i. 15, ' Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some of good-will.' They may preach to others, who are but hollow-hearted men themselves ; and a man's most excellent gifts, and the duties of God's own worship, may be prostituted to so base an end as to hide and feed our lusts. So Christ speaketh of the hypocrites giving alms 'to be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 1 ; and praying to be 'seen of men,' ver. 5. These things are incident to the corrupt heart of man, even sometimes when it is in part renewed ; by ends and motives interposing themselves ; but good christians had need to resist the very first motions of these things, for where they are once rooted in the heart, and prevail, our duties are not a worship of God, but a service of sin, and we ourselves will be found at length but insincere and rotten-hearted hypocrites. A christian should content himself with God's approbation ; and needs no other theatre than his own conscience, nor other spectator than our Father who 'seeth in secret,' Mat. vi. 4, 6. Besides the sweet testimony of the conscience following upon such actions ; and in time this shall be laid open, and found to our praise and honour. It is God and glory the upright heart aimeth at, and bendeth his study, heart, and life to seek.

2. It maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty. *Finis est mensura mediorum*—the aptitude and fitness of means is judged of by the end. Let a man fix upon a right end and scope, and he will soon understand his way, and will address himself to such means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without any circuits and wanderings. What is the reason that men fill up their lives with things that are impertinent to their great end, and sometimes altogether inconsistent with it ? Because they have not fixed their scope, or do not regard their end. A man that hath resolutely determined that this is his end, to be accepted of God and to enjoy God, he valueth God's favour as his happiness, the being reconciled to him, and his great care the pleasing of him,—his utmost industrious employment of his life is nothing else but a seeking to please, honour, and enjoy God. And so by this means—(1.) Impertinencies, (2.) Inconsistencies, are prevented and cut off.

[1.] Do but consider how many impertinencies are cut off if I be true to my end and great scope ; for instance, when I remember that my business is to be accepted of God at the last, and am resolved to seek after that and mind that, can I spend my time in ease and idleness, or carnal vanities and recreations ? Eccl. ii. 2. 'What doth it ?' What good and profit cometh of this ? What respect hath it to my great end ? When

I am gaming and sporting away my precious time, or it may be, but trifling it away in impertinent chatting and vain censures, is this the way to heaven? Shall I get thither sooner by toying or praying; by sowing to the flesh, or the spirit; by studying the word of God, and meditating therein day and night, or by reading romances, filthy plays, and obscene and scurrilous writings; by cards and dice, or by holy conference and praising God? Alas! if men would but sum up the employment of every day, they might write at the bottom of the account, Here is nothing but vanity, a great deal of time spent, and a pudder made, and little or nothing done to our great end. Christians, what do you? Or what have you done? Jer. viii. 6. That question is to be answered, not only by reflecting upon your rule, but by reflecting upon your end.

[2.] It will not only cut off impertinencies, but a far greater mischief, and that is, inconsistencies with our great end: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite from it, by doing actions directly contrary; vanities are impertinent to our great end, but direct sins are inconsistent. Would men dishonour God, and disobey his laws, and grieve his Spirit, if they did remember seriously that their misery and happiness did depend upon God's pleasure or displeasure? Surely then they would avoid God's wrath and displeasure, and sin which is the cause of it, as the greatest misery and evil that can befall them, and seek after his favour as their great happiness.

3. It would solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience, the hardships and inconveniences of our pilgrimage, and that mean and afflicted state of life wherein perhaps God will employ us and exercise us for his glory.

[1.] It would sweeten the difficulties of obedience, for the end doth sweeten the means. It is troublesome to the flesh to limit and confine our desires and actions within the compass of a strict rule, but it satisfieth a resolved heart to remember that either we must please the flesh or please the Lord. If now it be troublesome to us, hereafter it will be comfortable. Wicked men have comfort now when they want it not, and need it not, but in their greatest extremity they want it. Look, as in winter-time there are great land floods, when the rain and season of the year affordeth water enough, and no land needs them; but in summer, when there is the greatest drought, then they appear not. Wicked men have comfort enough in the creature, and too much for them; their hearts are merry now, and they are glutted with the delights of sense, and they are still seeking new comforts; but in the time of extremity, when they most need comfort, these comforts are spent, and leave them under anguish and torment. But on the other side, a child of God, that abridgeth himself of the contentments of the flesh, and roweth against the current and stream of carnal nature, and exposeth himself to great losses and inconveniences for Christ's sake, he had need of some solace to mitigate his sorrows and sweeten present difficulties. Now, what greater encouragement can there be than to think how God will welcome us with a Well done, and Well suffered, good and faithful servant? Mat. xxv. 21, 23. What comfort

and joy and peace will it be unto us when we come to die ! Then we shall see the labour is not lost, the sufferings for righteousness' sake were not in vain ; the time we have spent in holy converse with God will be then sweet to us in the last review ; but the time spent in sin and vanity and idleness and fleshly designs will be very grievous and tormenting. And though it be difficult to live in an exact course of self-denying obedience, yet when we shall have the approbation of God and conscience, the fore-thought of which is a mighty solace to us now, carnalists will then wish, Oh that I had pleased God as I have pleased men and my own sinful heart ! Oh, would to God I had lived better, served God and denied myself a little while, that I might have enjoyed myself and my God for ever !

[2.] It may be God seeth fit to exercise us with a mean or an afflicted estate ; either he will keep us low and bare, or else weak and sickly, or in disrepute and obscurity, rejected by the world, as Jesus Christ was rejected of men, or censured and traduced by men. And we have no means to help ourselves, and vindicate our innocency. Oh ! but if we may be accepted of the Lord at length, we have no reason to complain. Man's day is nothing to God's day : 1 Cor. iv. 3. 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' &c. God will count me faithful, and reward my innocent and sincere, though imperfect, endeavours. God will be glorified by his servants, sometimes in a high, sometimes in a low and afflicted condition. Look, as in a choir or concert of voices he is commended that sings well, whether he sings the bass, or the mean, or the treble, that is nothing, so he singeth his part well, but he is despised and disallowed that sings amiss, whatever voice he useth ; so doth God approve, accept, and reward his people that serve and glorify him in any state, whether it be high or low, rich or poor, eminent or obscure. God puts us sometimes in one condition, sometimes in another ; but those that carry themselves ill in their estate are rejected by him, and punished. It is not riches or poverty, wealth or health, that God looketh after, but those that carry themselves well in either ; which is a great solace to a gracious heart, and helpeth us to an indifference for all temporal things, so we may be approved by God at last ; as the apostle, Phil. i. 20, 'So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.' As a resolved traveller taketh his way as he findeth it, fair or foul, so it will lead him to his journey's end.

Secondly, That this must be our work as well as our scope ; and this design must be carried on with the greatest seriousness, as our great care and business ; and with unwearied industry, as the main thing which we attend upon, as a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone, for it is in the text, 'We labour.' There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life : making religion our business, and making religion our recreation. It must be our business in opposition to slightness ; it must be our recreation in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness. The word in the text hath a special signification. We should with no less earnestness endeavour to please God than they that contend for honour in the world ; we should make it our constant employment that God may like us for the present and take us home to him at

length into his blessed company and presence: What is all the world to this? There are a sort of men, whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, that make it their first care and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, whose minds and hearts, whose life and love and cares and labours, are taken up about the everlasting world; but there are others who are plotting for preferment, gaping for worldly greatness, gratifying the desires of the flesh, seeking the favour of great ones, raising their estate, name, and family; they look no higher than this world, and think only of their settlement upon earth, or laying designs for rising here, and perpetuating themselves and their names in their posterity by successive generations. ‘The world, morally considered, is divided into two societies: the one of the devil, the other of God.’—*Augustine de Civitate Dei*. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven. By nature we are all of the earthly society, by grace transplanted, and then we first ‘seek the kingdom of God,’ Mat. vi. 33; ‘Have our conversation in heaven,’ Phil. iii. 20; carry ourselves as of a heavenly extraction. All is known by our business, a constant fidelity to approve ourselves to God, and a ready obedience in all conditions of life, sheweth which sort we are of. What is it that you have been doing in the world, and the end and business for and in which you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in view and chase? Have you laboured for paltry vanities, or the meat that perisheth not? John vi. 27. A man is known by his labour. Have you lived for the world, or God? If you have spent so many years, and you know not why, or about what, you have been strangely careless and forgetful. What hath your great care been? To please the flesh, or to please God, and be saved by him? What have you made provision for, either for earth, or for heaven? You do for both, but for which most?

Thirdly, We must not only take care that we be accepted of God at last, when we go out of the body, but whilst we are present in the body it concerneth us to know that we are well-pleasing to him. We must strive to be accepted of him now. It is a blessed thing at the close of our pilgrimage that God will receive us into his glory; but while we continue in the body, the believing apprehensions of the favour of God are very comfortable, before we come to enjoy the fruits of it.

1. How else can we long for the coming of Christ, and expect his appearance, if before we pass to our judgment we know not whether we shall be accepted, yea or no? Now within time it concerneth us to know how we shall fare hereafter. Man hath a curiosity to know his destiny, as the king of Babylon stood at the beginning of the ways to make divination. The good and the evil of the world is of such light concernment, and of so short continuance, and God is so good, that we may trust him blindfold for worldly things; and it is a wicked, foolish, and needless curiosity to be so desirous to know our fortune. But it concerneth us much to know whether we shall be well or ill for ever—how the case will be carried in the last judgment: if it be evil, that we may prevent it, and correct our error; in death we cannot err twice: if good, that we may know our portion, and rejoice in it; if it be our happiness, then it must needs be very desirable to

know it beforehand. In the next verse to the text, ver. 10, he speaketh of our judge; our happiness and final doom dependeth upon his being pleased with us; if we apprehend him as an angry judge, or an adversary, let us agree with him quickly by the way; if he be a gracious father, let us have the solace and comfort of it during our pilgrimage, while we so much need it.

2. Else we cannot comfortably enjoy communion with God for the present. How can we come before him, if we know not whether he will accept an offering at our hands? They who, being in a state of faith and reconciliation, make it their endeavour to please God, have God ever with them: John viii. 24, ‘He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him.’ They that would have the comfort of God’s presence and company in all conditions, they ought to set themselves to please God, and observe his will in all things; and when we have any special business to do with God: 1 John iii. 22, ‘And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.’ So that while we are present, we are accepted of him.

3. We cannot have a cheerful fruition of the creature and worldly enjoyments till God accepteth us; Eccles. ix. 7, ‘Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth thy works.’ Till we are in a reconciled estate, accepted by God, all our comforts are but as stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, like Damocles’ banquet, while a sharp sword hung over his head by a slender thread. But now when our persons and ways are pleasing unto God, then all these comforts are sweet and satisfactory; we taste God’s love in them, and can use them as his blessings, with cheerfulness and thankfulness.

4. That which maketh us more lively and active in our course of pleasing God is (1.) The future judgment; (2.) The hope of our presence with him.

[1.] The future judgment. That I gather from ver. 10, ‘For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ There will certainly come a day when every person that ever lived in this world shall be judged by God, and this day is sure and near. In this life we are always expecting an end, and carried in a boat that is swiftly wafting us towards eternity. Now whom should we please, and with whom should we seek to be accepted? A vain world, or frail man, or the God to whom we must strictly give an account? Surely this universal, impartial judgment bindeth us to carry it so that we may be accepted with God.

[2.] The hope of our presence with him, and the beatiful vision and fruition of him; for in the context he speaketh of presence and sight, and then he saith, ‘Wherefore we labour.’ We are so sluggish and backward, because we seldom think of the world to come; earthly things are the great poise to an earthly mind, but heavenly things to a heart that is spiritual; that is their motive. There are many such *wherfores* in the scripture: 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let us be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;’ and Heb. xii. 28, ‘Wherefore we, receiving a

kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' There being such an eminent and excellent state of glory, and we being candidates and suitors for it, how should it quicken us to use all diligence, that we may be accepted of God, and admitted into the fruition of it. The apostle telleth us, Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Paul had his eye still upon the mark, that he might steer his whole course in order to it; the thoughts of the prize, and worth of the reward, made him press forward through difficulties and discouragements. The more we have this glory in our thoughts, the more shall we be heartened against faintings and failings, which we shall ever and anon be tempted unto.

Secondly, Some reasons of the point.

1. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that by a constant course of obedience we might approve ourselves to God, and finally be accepted of with him, and received into his glory. It is good to consider the end why we were born and sent into the world: John xviii. 37, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' Surely man was made for some end, for the wise God would make nothing in vain. Now what is man's end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones; and not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as trees; not to eat and drink, and serve appetite, as the beasts; not for the earth; the end is more noble than the means; not dig for iron with mattocks of gold. The earth was made for us to be our habitation for a while, not we for it. Surely God made all things for himself: Prov. xvi. 4; and Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;' so we especially, who have the faculties of heart and mind to know him, and love him, and serve him, and enjoy him for ever. Now we seek after him, our whole life is a coming to God. We have not enough of God here to satisfy the soul, only enough to direct and incline us to seek more; and every one that seriously mindeth his end, maketh it his trade and daily work: John vi. 38, 'I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.'

2. We were redeemed to this end; for we are redeemed unto God: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' To be redeemed unto God is to be redeemed to his service, and admitted into his favour and friendship and communion with him, to restore God's right to us, and our happiness in the enjoyment of heaven. Christ first appeased God's wrath, and restored us to a course of service, which we should comfortably carry on till we have received our wages: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

3. Our entering into covenant with God implieth it. In every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*—something given and something required: Isa. lvi. 4, 'They choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' To take hold of his covenant there, is to lay claim to the privileges and benefits promised and offered therein. Now this cannot be done unless we choose the things that please him;

that is, voluntarily, deliberately, not by chance, but choice, enter into a course of obedience, wherein we may be pleasing or acceptable to him ; this is the fixed determination of our souls. Our faces must be set heavenward, and the drift, aim, and bent of our lives must be for God, to walk in his way : Rom. xii. 1, ‘I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.’ A man devoteth himself to God, out of the sense of his love, to serve him and please him in all things.

4. The relations which result from our covenant interest. There is the relation between us and Christ of husband and spouse, Hos. ii. 19. Now the duty of the wife is to please the husband, 1 Cor. vii. 34. The relation of children and father, 2 Cor. vi. 18, ‘I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.’ Now the duty of children is to please the parents ; and that is said to be well-pleasing to the Lord, Col. iii. 20, and the rather because it is a pattern of our own duty to him. Masters and servants : Ezek. xvi. 8, ‘Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine ;’ Acts xxvii. 23, ‘Whose I am, and whom I serve.’ They that please themselves carry themselves as if they were their own, not God’s. All that we are, and all that we have and can do, must be his, and used for him in one way or another.

Use 1. Is for reproof of those that study to please men. To approve themselves to the world, to be accepted in the world, that is their great end and scope.

1. How can these comply with the great duty of christians, which is to please the Lord ? Gal. i. 10, ‘If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.’ To hunt after the favour of men, and to gain the applause of the world, is contrary to the very essential disposition of the saints, whose great aim is to approve themselves to God, however men esteem of them. There is a pleasing men to their edification : Rom. xv. 2, ‘Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification ;’ and 1 Cor. x. 33, ‘Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.’ But to please the sinful humours, dispositions, and affections of men, to make this our great scope, is contrary to sincerity and fidelity in Christ’s service. Certainly a man ought not to disoblige others, much less irritate and stir up the corruptions of others, but his great care must be to approve himself to God.

2. There is no such necessity of the approbation of men, as of God ; his acceptation, and the testimony of a good conscience concerning our fidelity in his service, is more than all the favour, countenance, applause, or any advantage that can come by men. Choose the approbation of Christ, and you are made for ever ; it is not so if you choose the approbation of men. Please God, and no matter who is your enemy, Prov. xvi. 9. Please men, and God may be angry with you, and blast all your carnal happiness, as well as deny you eternal happiness. Please the Lord, and that is the best way to be at peace with men.

Use 2. By way of self-reflection. Is this your great scope and end ?

1. Your end will be known by your work. If you labour to approve yourself to God in every relation, in every condition, in every business, in every employment, and are still using yourselves and all that you

have for God, this is your trade, and this is your study ; you are still at his work, that if a man should ask you, What are you a-doing ? Whose work is it that you are employed about ? you may be able truly to say, it is the Lord's. For whom are you studying, preaching, conferring, praying ? What guideth you in all your relations ? To whom do you approve yourselves ? For whom are you sick or well ? 2 Cor. v. 15, 'That they which live should not live to themselves, but unto him which died for them ;' and Rom. xiv. 7-9, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself ; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' What moveth you to go on with any business ? Who supporteth you in your business ? Can you say to God, What God would have me to do, I do it ?

2. If this be your end, it will be known by your solace. So much as a man doth attain unto his end, so much doth he attain of content and satisfaction : 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world.' You will not rejoice so much in the effects of his common bounty as in his special love : so Ps. iv. 7, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.'

3. If God's glory be your scope, any condition will be tolerable to you, so as you may enjoy his favour. Man's displeasure may be the better borne ; yea, poverty and want. Your great cordial is your acceptance with God ; and losses are the better borne ; as David comforted himself in the Lord his God, when all was lost at Ziklag ; and Hab. ii. 1, 'I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.'

SERMON XIII.

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.—2 COR. v. 10.

PAUL'S motives to faithfulness in his ministry were three : hope, fear, and love. Hope of a blessed immortality ; fear, or an holy reverence wrought in him by the consideration of the last judgment ; love to Christ, ver. 14. We just now come to the second consideration ; it fitly falleth in with the close of the former branch, as a reason why it must be our chiefest care to approve heart and life to God. Not only the hope of the resurrection breedeth this care to please God, but also the consideration of the general judgment. We are so cold, careless, and backward, because we seldom think of these things ; but if we did oftener think of them, it would make us more awful and serious ; we would soon see that though we can approve ourselves to the world,

yet it will not profit us unless we approve ourselves to God, for all dependeth upon his doom and sentence, ‘For we must all appear,’ &c.

In the words observe a description of the day of judgment. Wherein—

1. The necessity of this judgment—*δεῖ, We must.* Judged we must be, willing or unwilling.

2. The universality of this judgment; who must be judged—in the word *πάντας, All.*

3. The person by whom we shall be judged. The text speaketh of the judgment-seat of Christ. He is our rightful lord, to whom this judgment belongeth; and he hath his judgment-seat and throne of glory, as it is called: Mat. xxv. 31, ‘Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.’ What that is, because it is wholly to come, and not elsewhere explained in scripture, we know not; we must rest in the general expression. The cloud in which he cometh shall possibly be his throne; or, if you will have it farther explained, you may take that description of the prophet Daniel, chap. vii. 9, 10. Of this see more in sermon on Mat. xxv. 31.

4. The manner — *We must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, φανερωθῆναι.* The word signifieth two things—

[1.] To stand forth and make our appearance, Rom. xiv. 10. There it is *παραστῆναι.* ‘We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.’

[2.] Or else, to be made manifest. And so rendered, ver 11, ‘But we are made manifest before God, and I trust are made manifest in your consciences.’ So here our hearts and ways shall be laid open, as well as we; every action of our lives shall be taken into consideration. Well then, we must appear so as to be made manifest in our thoughts, words, and deeds; we must not only appear in person, but be laid open, have our whole life ripped up, and have all our thoughts, words, and works disclosed before men and angels.

5. The matter about which we shall be judged—*The things done in the body;* that is, during the bodily life. The body is the shop of action, wherein or whereby everything is done. Mechedius telleth us it is *σύζυγον τῆς ψύχης*—the yokefellow or colleague of the soul. Now whatever is done by it, good or evil, is the cause to be tried.

6. The end—that every man may be punished or rewarded according to his deserts; the end is, that there may be sentence given, and after sentence execution, both as to reward and punishment.

[1.] Mark the emphasis of the phrase—‘The things done in the body.’ We are said to receive them when we receive the fruits of them: so, Eph. vi. 8, ‘Whatsoever good thing a man doth, the same shall he receive, whether bond or free.’ So here, things done in the body are the just reward of those things.

[2.] Observe the several kinds of retribution—‘Good or bad;’ both the godly and the wicked receive a full recompence at that time.

[3.] The proportion—according to their several ways; only the reward of good is of grace, of evil of desert; Rom. vi. 23, ‘The wages of sin is death.’

Doct. There will certainly come a day when every person that ever lived shall be judged by Christ according to his works.

I shall examine this point by the circumstances of the text.

First, The necessity. He might have said, We *shall* appear; no, but he saith, We *must* appear. God hath so appointed.

Here I shall speak—

1. Of the certainty of the thing; there *must* be a judgment.

2. The infallible certainty of the event: there *shall* be a judgment.

1. It must be so; for God hath decreed it, and reason enforceth it. But why is it necessary? I answer, not to discover anything to God,—(1.) But partly, that grace may be glorified in and by the righteous: 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Hope unto the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ Then is the largest and fullest manifestation of God’s love to his people. We see his grace now in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification which now we attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and take us into his family, and give us a taste of his love, and a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service; but then it will be another manner of grace and favour indeed, when pardon and approbation shall be pronounced and ratified by the judge’s own mouth, Acts iii. 19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and palace: John xii. 26, ‘Where I am, there shall my servant be;’ when he giveth us not only a right, but the possession, Mat. xxv. 34, ‘Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;’ when we shall not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlasting employed in loving, delighting in, and praising of God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal companions in the work. The grace of God, or his favour to his people, is never seen in all its glorious graciousness till we be glorified. (2.) That the wicked may be convinced of their sin and defect, they come upon a trial, and the fault of all their mis-carriage is charged on themselves. It is hard to determine which is the greater torment to them, the righteousness or terribleness of the sentence. God leaveth them without excuse: Rom. i. 20; Ps. l. 21, ‘I will set all thy sins in order before thee.’ Sins forgotten, lost in the crowd by a secure sinner, in the day of God’s reckoning shall be brought to remembrance, with time, place, and other circumstances, and so presented to conscience as if newly done. (3.) That God’s justice may be cleared: Ps. li. 4. ‘That thou mayest be clear when thou judgest.’ When he giveth to men according to their choice, and according to the merit of their own works, there lieth no just exception against God’s proceeding. The justice of God requireth that there should be differing proceeding with them that differ among themselves, that it should be well with them that do well, and evil with them that do evil; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown. Therefore those whom Christ will receive into everlasting life must appear faithful and obedient, for then God will judge the world in righteousness, Acts. xvii. 31; now in patience towards the wicked, now by way of exercise and trial of his people.

2. The certainty of the event—‘The hour is coming,’ John v. 28. That there is such a time coming, he ill deserveth the name of a christian who maketh any question of it. But because many live as if

they shall never be called to an account, I shall evidence that certainly we shall appear, both by natural light and scripture.

[1.] Let the evidence of reason be heard so far as it will go: reason sheweth that it may be, and argueth—

(1.) From the nature of God. There is a God; that God is just; and it is agreeable to his justice that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil. These are principles out of dispute, and foundations in the structure and building of the christian faith. Here the best suffer most, and are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of persecutions, and the wicked live a life of pomp and ease; how shall we reconcile these things with the notions which we have of God and his providence? No satisfactory account can be given but this: the wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future reward. Here the goodness of God towards the good, and the justice of God towards the wicked, is not enough manifested; therefore there is a day when his judgment shall be brought to light, and his different respect to good and bad made more conspicuous.

(2.) From the providence of God. There are many judgments which are pledges of the general judgment, that at length God will judge the whole world for sin: as the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom, the destruction of Jerusalem; these are as a warning to all, for it is said, Jude 7, these are set forth as a ‘warning to all that should live ungodly.’ God is the same still: Gal. iii. 20, ‘God is one;’ that is, in one mind of punishing the wicked, without variation and change. He hateth the sins of one, as well as of another; if he would not put up the iniquities of the old world, he will not put up the iniquities of the new; if he punished the iniquities of Sodom, he will punish the iniquities of others who sinned in like manner. God is not grown more indulgent to sin than he was before; though it be not now, there will be a time when he will call them to a reckoning. In every age he keepeth a petty sessions, but then will be the general assizes. When man first sinned, God did not immediately execute the sentence of his law upon him, but giveth him time of repentance till he dieth. As he giveth every man time and space, so he giveth all the world; for he would not have all the world to be born at once and die at once, but to live in several successions of ages, from father to son throughout divers generations, till we come to that period which his providence hath fixed. Now, as he reckoneth with every man particularly at his death, so with all the world at the end of time. Particular judgments show that God is not asleep, or unmindful of human affairs, but the general judgment is deferred till then.

(3.) From the feelings of conscience. After sin men are troubled, though there be none about them in the world to call them to an account, or though the fact be done so secretly that it is not liable to a human tribunal. Nature is sensible that there is a higher judgment, that divine justice must have a solemn triumph; conscience is afraid of it. Heathens are sensible of such a thing: Rom. i. 32, ‘Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.’ Felix trembled at the mention of it, which sheweth there is an easy reception of such a truth, Acts xxiv. 25. There is a hidden fear in the consciences of all men, which is soon revived and

awakened by the thoughts of this truth. Every guilty person is more or less held in the chains of darkness, which sheweth how easily this truth can insinuate itself into a rational mind.

[2.] Faith sheweth that it shall be. The light of faith is more certain and more distinct. It is more certain, for it buildeth upon a divine testimony, which is more infallible than the guesses of reason; and it is more distinct, for nature could never find out the circumstances of that day—as, by whom this judgment shall be managed, and in what manner, that God hath appointed one man by whom he will judge the world in righteousness, that he shall come in the glory of his father, and all the holy angels with him. Faith concludeth this certainty:—

(1.) From that revelation which God hath made in his word, Mat. xiii. 49, 50, ‘So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;’ John v. 28, 29, ‘The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;’ Heb. ix. 27, ‘And it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;’ Rom. xiv. 12. ‘So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God;’ Mat. xii. 36, 37, ‘But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;’ Rev. xx. 12, ‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works;’ and in many other places; for this being a necessary truth is more plentifully revealed than others of lesser importance. This was the great promise ever kept afoot in the church. Scoffers took notice of it, saying, ‘Where is the promise of his coming?’ The apostle Jude intimateth the ancient promise of it: Jude 14, ‘And Enoch also, the seventh son from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.’ And it hath been revived in all ages; by Moses and David, and Daniel and Joel, Zechariah and Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself, and his apostles everywhere. Now we may reason, that God, who hath been faithful in all things, he will not fail at last; he hath ever stood to his word when more unlikely things have been promised. Were the believers of the Old Testament deceived, that expected his coming in the flesh? Surely Christ never meant to deceive us when he said, John xiv. 2, 3, ‘I will come again; if it were not so, I would have told you.’ See sermon on Mat. xxv. 6.

(2.) The types show it. I shall instance in one, which is the high priest’s entering with blood into the holy place within the veil; and when he had finished his service and ministration there, he came forth to bless the people, which the apostle explaineth and applieth to Christ, Heb. ix. 24–28.

(3.) There are ordinances appointed in the church to keep afoot the remembrance of his promise—the Lord’s supper: 1 Cor. xi. 26,

'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument of his faithfulness, that upon all occasions we may renew our hopes and expectations of it.

(4.) We have an inward pledge—his Spirit, and the visits of his grace. He hath taken our flesh, and left with us his Spirit. He went not from us in anger, but in love, to set all things at rights, and to bring us there where he is.

(5.) Christ's interest is concerned in it—

(1st.) That the glory of his person may be seen. His first coming was obscure and without observation. Then he came in the form of a servant, but now he will come as the lord and heir, in power and glory. Then John Baptist was his forerunner, now an archangel. Then he came with twelve disciples, men of mean condition in the world, a few poor fishermen; now with legions of angels, Jude 14. Then as a minister of circumcision, now as the judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, now he cometh to render vengeance to the neglecters and despisers of his grace. Then he offered himself as a mediator between God and man, as a high priest to God and an apostle to men, Heb. iii. 1, but veiled his divinity under the infirmities of his flesh; now he cometh in God's name to judge men, and in all his glory. Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures; at the day of judgment there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of his person, because all will be obvious to sense. Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, and was condemned to the cursed death of the cross; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their doom and sentence from his mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save, now to render unto every one according to their works. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, but now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many; now without sin, not bearing our burden, but our discharge, not as a surety, but as a paymaster, not as a sufferer, but a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil. He cometh no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery to himself.

(2d.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a dear rate, and would he be at all this loss and preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph, and he that purchased will possess, Heb. ii. 13.

(3d.) With respect to the wicked. It is a part of his office to triumph over them in their final overthrow. All things shall be put under his feet, Isa. xlv. 23, Rom. xiv. 10, 11, Phil. ii. 10.

(4th.) To require an account of things during his absence; what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. xxv.; what his church have done with his ordinances; how things have been carried during his absence in his house: 1 Tim. vi. 14, 'Keep this commandment without rebuke, unto the appearing of Jesus Christ;' whether men have carried themselves well, or beaten their fellow-servants, and eaten and drunk with the drunkard; whether they have strengthened the hands

of the wicked, oppressed with censures the most serious of his worshippers, what disorders in the world, what violation of the law of nature, 2 Thes. i. 8.

Secondly, The universality. Who must be judged? ‘We must all.’ All mankind which ever were, are, and shall be. No age, no sex, no nation, nor dignity, nor power, nor wealth, nor greatness, can excuse us. In the world some are too high to be questioned, others too low to be taken notice of; but there all are taken notice of by head and poll; not one of the godly shall be lost, but will meet in that general assembly. Nor shall any of the wicked shift the day of his appearance; as we may obey in every state and sin in every state, so in every state we must give an account. All that have lived from the beginning of the world till that day shall without exception appear, from the least to the greatest, before the tribunal of Christ.

This will be illustrated by considering the several distinctions of mankind:—

The first and most obvious distinction is into grown persons and infants.

The second distinction is those whom Christ shall find dead or alive at his coming.

The third distinction is of good or bad.

The fourth distinction of men whom Christ shall judge are believers and unbelievers.

Fifth, Men of all conditions, high and low, rich and poor; of these see Mat. xxv. 33, ser. iii.

Sixth, Men of all callings in the church, apostles and private christians, ministers and people; for the apostle here in the text joineth himself with others, and saith, ‘We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ Besides the law of christianity, by which all shall be judged, the officers and guides of the church must give an account of their faithfulness in their ministration. There is much spoken in scripture of their account: 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5, ‘I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.’ He speaketh there of the execution of his apostolical office; though he was conscious to himself of no fault in it, yet this was not the clearing of him, only God that searcheth and seeth all must do this. It is a great matter to clear a man’s fidelity, first as a minister, then as a private christian. Paul would not venture it upon the single testimony of his own conscience; so again, Heb. xiii. 17, ‘They watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.’ Their work is to watch over souls for their eternal salvation. If souls miscarry through their negligence, they are answerable to God for it; but if they miscarry through their own wilfulness, the loss is the people’s; they have the crown of faithfulness, if not of fruitfulness. The crown of fruitfulness is spoken of, 1 Thes. iii. 19, 20, ‘What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.’ The Thessalonians were a good people, famous for their proficiency in the faith, and endurance

of persecutions; and this was Paul's crown (who had begotten them to Christ) in the day of doom. Now when they give up their account, not with joy but grief, that is not unprofitable to the ministers; but to the people it is unprofitable. It may be good unto the ministers, who have been faithful, but not to the people, who have been disobedient.

Seventh, Every individual person, all and every one must appear; see Mat. xxv. 33, ser. iii. Well then, since there is such a day, let it be our care to approve our hearts and lives to God.

SERMON XIV.

*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.—
2 COR. v. 10.*

THIRDLY, I come to speak of the judge.—Who shall be the judge? And there I shall prove that the judge of the world is the Lord Jesus Christ;—‘For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ For the evidencing of this, I shall inquire—

1. Why this honour is devolved and put upon the second person.
2. Show in what nature he shall judge the world, whether as God or man, or both.

First, How Christ comes to be the world’s judge, and with what convenience and agreeableness to reason this honour is put upon him. To a judge there belong these four things—wisdom, justice, power, and authority..

1. Wisdom and understanding, by which he is able to judge of all persons and causes that come before him, according to the rules and laws by which the judgment is to proceed. No man can give sentence in a cause where he hath not skill as to matter of right, or sufficient evidence or knowledge as to matter of fact. And therefore, in ordinary judicatures, a prudent and discerning person is chosen for judge, one that knows what is right, and what is law, and that goes upon the evidence that is brought upon the matter of fact.

2. Justice is required, or a constant and unbiased will, to determine and pass sentence *ex aequo et bono*, according as right and truth shall require. He that gives wrong judgment because he does not accurately understand the matter, is imprudent, which in his station is a great fault; but he that understands the matter, yet, being biased by perverse affections and aims, gives wrong judgment in a cause brought before him, he is not only imprudent, but unjust, and that is the highest wickedness, the most impious and flagitious.

3. Power is necessary, that he may compel the parties judged to stand to his judgment, and the offenders may receive their due punishment, for otherwise all is but precarious and arbitrary, and the judgment given will be but a vain and solemn pageantry, a mere personating or acting of a part, if there be not power to back the sentence, and bring the persons to the tribunal, that accordingly it may be executed upon them.

4. There is required authority; for otherwise, if a man should obtrude himself of his own accord, we may say to him as they to Lot, Who made thee a judge over us? If by force he should assume this to himself, or have a pretence of right, I may decline and shift his tribunal, and appeal from him. Certainly he that rewards must be superior, and much more he that punisheth; for he that punisheth another brings some notable evil, detriment, and damage upon him, but to do that to another, unless we have right to it, is a high degree of injustice.

Now wisdom, and justice, and power, and authority, do all concur in the case; for these things, as they are necessary in all judicial proceedings between man and man, much more in this great and solemn transaction of the last judgment, which will be the greatest that ever was, both in respect of the persons judged, high and low, rich and poor, prince and subject; in respect of the causes to be judged, the whole business of the world for 6000 years, or thereabouts; and in respect of the retributions that shall ensue, this judgment, the punishments and rewards in the highest degree, the highest punishment that ever was inflicted, and the highest reward that ever was distributed, and that infinite and everlasting. Therefore there must be a judge that hath an exact knowledge, knowing not only the laws, but all persons and causes—that all things should be ‘naked, and open, to him with whom we have to do,’ Heb. iv. 13; such a judge who knows the thoughts of our hearts, 1 John iii. 20, and can proceed upon sufficient evidence against every one that comes before him. Again, he must be exceeding just, without the least spot and blemish of wrong-dealing, for otherwise he cannot sustain his office, if he be not immutably just. See how the judge of the world is described, Gen. xviii. 25, ‘Shall not the judge of all the world do right?’ So when something was spoken which seemed to blemish the justice of God, the apostle saith, Rom. iii. 5, 6, ‘Is God unrighteous? How then shall he judge the world?’ That were impossible. Judgment may be put into a person’s hands that possibly may be unrighteous, but it cannot be that the universal and final judgment of all the world should be committed to him that hath, or can do, anything that is unlawful or amiss. Again, power is necessary to summon the offenders, to gather up the dead from all places of their dispersion, to give every dust its own body, and to make them appear and stand to the judgment which he will award, without hope of escaping or resisting. That power is very necessary will easily appear, because the offenders are so many, and are scattered to and fro, some in the sea, some in the earth, some buried in the bodies of wild beasts, multitudes in the maws of fishes. It must be a mighty power that can give every one his own body again. If it were possible, they would fain decline the tribunal, and hide themselves from the throne of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 16; but it cannot be. And authority is necessary also, which is a right to govern and to dispose of the persons judged, which being all the world, it belongs only to the universal king; it must be such a person that made all things, that preserves all things, that governs and disposes of all things to his own glory. Legislation and execution both belong to the same power. Judgment is part of government. Laws are but

shadows, if no execution follow. And therefore let us come particularly, and see how all this belongs to Christ ; that he is the only wise God ; and he is the just God, that cannot err ; that he is the mighty God, whose hand none can escape ; and he is the universal king, that hath an absolute and supreme authority ; therefore he must be the judge of the world.

1. For wisdom and understanding, it is in Christ twofold—divine and human (for each nature hath its proper wisdom belonging to it). As Christ is God, his wisdom and his understanding are infinite, as it is said in the Psalms ; and so by one act of understanding he knows all things that are, have been, yea, that shall be, or may be. He knows all things that shall be in his own decree, and all things that may be by his divine power and all-sufficiency ; they are all before him naked, as the apostle infers, Heb. iv. 13, cut down as it were by the chine-bone. As when we cut down a beast by the chine-bone, and divide his body, we may see all things within him ; so all things are naked and open to God. We know things successively, God knows them all at once. If a man were to read a book, he must go from line to line, or from page to page ; but God's knowledge is just such a thing as if a man should see through a book by one act of his mind, by one view, could know all that was contained in that book by one glance of his eye. Well, this is his divine wisdom. For his human wisdom, that cannot be equal to this, for a finite nature is not capable of an infinite understanding. But yet his human wisdom is such as doth far exceed the knowledge of all men and angels. When Christ was upon earth, though the forms of things could not but successively come into his mind (as a man, he must understand as men do in understanding, because of the limited nature of the mind and understanding), yet then he could know whatever he would. To whatsoever thing he did apply his mind he did presently understand it, and that in a moment all things were presented to him ; so that he accurately knew the nature of things he had a mind to know. You find upon all occasions he was not ignorant of the thoughts and hearts of men, and when done so secretly, yet Christ knew them ; as when the woman came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment undiscernibly (as she thought) by a secret touch, then saith Christ, ‘Who touched me ? for virtue is passed from me,’ Luke viii. 45. Christ knew the touch of faith, knew the woman that came behind him, and would not be seen. And Mat. ix. 3, 4, ‘When certain Pharisees said within themselves, This man blasphemeth ;’ within their hearts, though they durst not say it publicly ; and Christ discovers their inward thoughts, and turns out the very inside of their souls ; so Mat. xii., Jesus knew their thoughts, when they imagined that by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he cast out devils. But more fully see that notable place which will set forth that no subtle devices we can use are sufficient to escape his knowledge : John ii. 23–25, ‘When he was at Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast-day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man ; for he knew what was in man.’ Mark, they are said to believe in Christ. Certainly their faith was not pretended only, but real,

though not a thorough faith, not rooted in their souls, though as yet they did not betray their insincerity. But ‘Jesus knew what was in man.’ We cannot infallibly discern the truth and falsehood of a profession before men discover themselves; but all hypocrites are known to him long before they show their hypocrisy. And known, how? Not by a conjectural, but by a certain knowledge, as being that knowledge that is from and by himself. As God he doth infallibly know what is most secret in man. Even then, when for the present we have but a moral sincerity, and do not dissemble, the Lord knows whether this is a true, real and supernatural work, for there may be a moral where there is not a supernatural sincerity. Now, if the Lord Jesus was endowed with such an admirable wisdom and understanding even in the days of his flesh, when he was capable of growing in wisdom as well as in stature, Luke ii, as his human capacity was enlarged by degrees (for he would in all things be like us except in sin), what shall we think of Christ glorified, when he comes in that state in which he is now glorious in heaven? When he comes to exercise this judgment, certainly he shall bring an incomparable knowledge, so far exceeding the manner and measure of all creatures, men or angels, even as he is man. But his infinite knowledge as he is God, that chiefly shines forth in this work; and therefore he is fit to judge; for he can bring forth the secret things of darkness, and the hidden counsels of the heart, 1 Cor. iv. 5, and shall despoil sinners of all their pretences and excuses, and plainly and undeniably pluck off their disguises from them. He knows all the springs, motions, hidden counsels of the heart, and secret things that move you and set you a-work.

2. For justice and righteousness. An incorrupt judge he is that neither hath, doth, or can err in the judgment. As there is a double knowledge in Christ, so there is also a double righteousness; the one that belongs to him as God, the other as man; and both are exact and immutably perfect. His divine nature is holiness itself—‘In him there is light, and no darkness at all,’ 1 John i. 5. The least shadow of injustice cannot be imagined in God; for God’s holiness is his being, it is not a superadded quality, as it is in us; the quality may be lost, yet the being remain; as in angels, holiness was a superadded quality; they had their angelical being, but lost their holiness; and when Adam fell, he lost that holiness and righteousness in which he was created, but yet he had his being. But God’s holiness is his very nature and essence. The holiness of God may be compared to a vessel that is all of pure gold; but the holiness of the creature may be compared to a vessel of wood and earth, that is only gilded; the outside is gold, but the substance of the vessel is another thing. Now, in a vessel of pure gold, there the lustre and the substance is the same. Our holiness is but gilding, it may be worn out; but God’s holiness is gold, he is holiness itself. We cannot call a wise man *wisdom*. We use the concrete when we speak of men—we say they are wise, good, holy; but we use the abstract of God—God is love, light, holiness, purity and mercy itself, which notes the inseparability of the attribute from his nature. God is himself, and God cannot deny himself. Peter Martyr sets forth the holiness of God by this comparison—‘Take a carpenter when he

hath chalked and drawn his line, then he goes and chops the timber. Sometimes he chops right, and sometimes amiss. Why? because he hath an outward rule without him—a line according to which he cuts the timber. But if you could suppose a carpenter that could never chop amiss, but his hand should be his line and rule, if he had such an equal poise and touch of his hand, that his very stroke is a rule to itself, he cannot err.' By this plain and homely comparison he did set forth the holiness of God and the creature. The holiness of the creature is a rule without us, therefore sometimes we chop and miss; but God's holiness is his rule, it is his nature, he can do nothing amiss.

Now let us consider his human nature; it was so sanctified since it dwelt with God in a personal union, that it was impossible that he could sin in the days of his flesh, much more now glorified in heaven; and there will be use of both in the last judgment; but chiefly the righteousness that belongs to the divine nature; for all the operations of Christ, his mediatorial actions, they are all done by God-man, neither nature ceaseth in him. Look, as in the works of man, all the external actions he doth, they are done by the body and soul—the body works, the soul works, according to their several natures,—yet both conspire and concur in that way that is proper to either; only in some actions there is more of the soul discovered, as in a brutish action, or action that requires strength, more of the body is discovered; yet the body and the soul concurs,—so the two natures all concur in Christ's actions, only in some works his human, in others his divine nature more appears. Look, as in the works of his humiliation his human nature did more appear, but still his divine nature manifested itself, also he offered up himself as God-man; but in the works that belong to his exaltation and glorified estate his divine nature appeared most; so in this solemn transaction, wherein Christ is to discover himself to the world in the greatest majesty and glory, he acts as God-man, only the divine nature more appears and discovers itself, because it belongs to his exaltation.

3. For power. A divine power is also plainly necessary, that none may withdraw themselves from this judgment, or resist and hinder the execution of his sentence, for otherwise it would be passed in vain, Titus ii. 13. Christ then comes to show himself as the great and powerful God. His power is seen in raising the dead, in bringing them into one place, in opening their consciences that they may have a review and sense of all their actions, and afterward in binding the wicked, hands and feet, and casting them into hell: Mat. xxiv. 13, 'The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory.'

4. His authority. I shall the longer insist upon this, because the main hinge of all lieth here; and this will bring the matter home to the second person, to prove that Jesus Christ, and no other but Christ, he is to be the world's judge, and it is his tribunal before whom 'we must all appear.' By the law of nature, the wronged party and the supreme power hath a right to require satisfaction for any wrong that is done. Let us consider Christ's authority a little, and weigh it in the balance of reason. I say, by the law of nature, where there is no power publicly constituted, where people live without law and govern-

ment, possibly there the wronged party hath power to require it, he is the avenger; but where things are better ordered, where there is law and government, lest the wronged party should indulge his revenge and passion for his own interest, therefore the supreme power takes vengeance to itself, and doth right, and will challenge the parties that offend, judge the matter that is in hand, will make amends to those that are wronged, either in body, goods, or good name.

Well, both these things concur: God is the wronged party, and the supreme judge, and therefore the judgment is devolved upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1.] He is the wronged party, that is offended with the sins of men; for it is his law that is broken, his authority that is despised, his glory that is trampled under foot. It is true, we cannot lessen God's happiness by anything that we can do; all that we do, it is but as a man that strikes at the light that shines upon a tree; he may cause his axe to fasten in the tree, but he hurts not the light. God is not really hurt, there is no loss or happiness by anything the creature can do; our good and evil extends not to him; his essential glory is still the same; whether we obey or disobey, please or displease, honour or dis-honour him that is eternally immutable; he is neither lessened nor increased by anything that we can do; he is out of the reach of all darts we cast at him. We may fling up darts to heaven; hurt us they may, not him. But how is sin a wrong to God? It is a wrong to his declarative glory, as he is the sovereign lord and law-giver, as a breach to his law and contempt of his authority. Look, as David, when he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, he wronged Uriah, but yet he says, Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned.' The sin was properly against God. God is the author of the light of nature, and the order of things, which begets a sense of good and evil in our hearts; and therefore, whoever sins against the light of nature is responsible to God. Conscience within him tells him he hath done something against God. If a man be poor, or sick, his conscience is not troubled for that; but if he hath done something disorderly, conscience being God's deputy, his mind may be troubled about it; if he hath committed adultery, or done anything that is contrary to the light of nature, his heart will be upon him, and summons him to appear before God to answer for the wrong done to God. I speak this because of the Gentiles. But now for christians. God certainly gave the law by Moses, and gave the law by Christ in the gospel; and therefore every sin of ours is an offence to God, as being a breach of that order he hath established, and the way of government under which he hath put us: 1 John iii. 4, 'Sin is a transgression of the law.' Laws cannot be despised; but the majesty of the law-giver is also violated, and therefore as God is the wronged party, God comes in to be our judge, to require satisfaction for the wrong we have done. There is something indeed in this, but God does not barely as an offended party, or as a private man would revenge himself, where there is no public power constituted to do him right. No; he properly judgeth us as the supreme and sovereign lord and governor of the world, to whom it belongs, as the universal king, to secure the ends of government for common good, to see that it be well with them that

do well, and ill with them that do ill ; and there is no compassion shown to any creature, but where the case is compassionate.

But more plainly to show how this right accrues to God, how he comes to be the supreme governor of the world. Several ways : either because of the excellency of his being, or because of the relation wherein we stand to him for all the benefits he bestows upon us ; we have all from him.

[1.] For the excellency of his being. This is according to the light of nature, that those that excel others should be chief and supreme, as it is clear in man above brute-beasts. Man was made to have dominion over them, having a more excellent nature than they, as in the first of Genesis. When God said, 'Let us make man,' presently God puts the government upon him, and gives him dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls in the air, and fish in the sea. So God being infinite, and far above all chief beings, hath power over all his creatures, angels and men, who are as nothing to him, therefore to be governed by him.

[2.] The title comes by virtue of the benefits that he hath bestowed upon us ; we have life, being, and all things from God ; therefore, certainly, the power and authority is in him. Look, as parents have power and authority over their children, who are a means under God to give them life and education, and the most barbarous people would acknowledge this ; how much more then hath God, who gives us life, breath, being, and well-being, and all things ? He hath created us out of nothing, and being once created, he preserves us, and gives us all the good things we enjoy ; and therefore we are obliged to be subject to him, and obey his holy laws, and to be accountable to him for the breach of them. And therefore let us state it thus : if that the excellency of his nature gives him a sufficiency for the government of mankind, his creation, preservation, and other benefits, they give him a full right to dispose of man, to make what laws he pleaseth, to call man to account whether he keep them, yea or no. Surely the right of God is greater than that which parents can have over their children ; for in natural generation parents are but only the instruments of his providence, acting only the power God gives them ; they propagate nothing to their children, but the matter of their being, and those things that belong to the body, Heb. xii. 9. Nay, God hath a greater hand in forming the child than the parents ; still they act as guided by God, and as influenced by his providence, for they cannot tell whether the child will be male or female, beautiful or deformed, they know not the number and posture of the bones, nerves, veins, sinews ; but God orders all these things by his own wisdom, and wonderfully frames us in the secret parts of the belly ; therefore the sovereignty certainly belongs to God, for it is he that forms the spirit of man within him, Zech. xii. 1. The soul is of God's immediate formation, and all the care and providence of our parents come to nothing, unless God direct it, and second it with his blessing. God is the judge of all creatures, visible and invisible, and from his empire and jurisdiction they neither can nor ought to exempt themselves. So that to be God and judge of the world is one and the same thing, only expressed by divers terms.

To gather up this argument. This is a certain rule: the owner of anything is necessarily a governor to it, if it be governable, if it be a creature that is capable of government, and hath an aptitude to be governed, for certainly an absolute propriety in a governable creature gives a plenary title. Now God made us out of nothing, and he made us capable of government, being rational and free agents, and therefore he must needs be our lord and governor. ‘All souls are mine,’ saith he, Ezek. xviii. 4. And it is devolved upon Christ our redeemer by a new right, for he died, rose again, and revived to this end; he hath purchased this authority to be Lord of quick and dead.

And it is as certain a rule that our governor must be our judge, for government consists of three parts: legislation, judgment, and execution—giving laws, and judging, and executing. God doth all these things by an authoritative constitution; he makes laws for man to oblige him to obedience. And in God’s laws there is a precept and a sanction; that is, there are rewards and penalties. The precept shows what we must do, the sanction shows what God will do; the precept shows what is due from the creature, the sanction shows what is due to the creature—that is, if he break this law, he shall be punished; if he keep this law, he shall be rewarded. Thus you see, God, being our governor, may make laws for man that is capable of laws. Now this sanction would be but a shadow and vain scarecrow if there were no judgment; for would God say, Do, and thou shalt live, believe, and thou shalt be saved, and never look after this, whether we do or believe? Therefore, as there is legislation, so there must be judging: but then this judgment must necessarily infer a thing,—that is, the execution—otherwise judgment would be but a solemn pageantry. But why is Christ judge of the world rather than the Father and Spirit, who also made us, and gave a law to us, and invested it with such a sanction, who are offended and grieved with our sins? I answer—

(1.) Consider, we have gone a great step to prove that it is the peculiar right of God, common to the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this in effect proves that Christ may execute it, for ‘they are one,’ 1 John v. 7. They have one common nature; and as to the operations that are without, the divine essence is common to them all. So that as the creation of all things is equally attributed to all, so also this act of judging the world. So that it belongs to all, for they are all equal in being, power, and glory. But as yet the thing is not explained enough, unless we grant it shall be exercised by all, or else prove out of scripture that one person is ordained by mutual consent, chosen out by the rest to exercise it for himself and for the other. But this I have proved already, God is the judge. And at first, when the doctrine of the Trinity was but sparingly revealed to the church, and not openly, it was not needful to inquire more nicely after it, but this general truth was sufficient. And Enoch, when he prophesied, doth not tell us of Christ the judge, but tells us, Jude 14, ‘Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,’ &c. And David speaks to God, Ps. xciv. 2, ‘Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth;’ and Ps. l. 6, ‘God is judge himself.’ It was enough to understand it so, without any distinction of the persons; but when once this mystery was most certainly mani-

fested by God manifest in our flesh, now we must inquire a little further.

(2.) I answer, There is an order in the persons of the blessed Trinity; as in the manner of subsisting, so also there is a certain order and economy according to which all their operations are produced and brought forth to the creature, according to which order the power of judging doth belong partly to the Father and partly to the Son.

(1st.) In the business of redemption. There the act of judging was exercised upon our surety, he was substituted into our room and place, and offered himself not only for our good, but in our room and stead, to bear our punishment, and to procure the favour of God to us. There the act of judging belonged to the Father, to whom the satisfaction was tendered, and before whom our advocate and surety must plead and present himself; therefore it is said, in 1 John ii. 1, ‘We have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.’ Thus our advocate pleads before the Father as before the judge.

(2dly.) As to the judgment to be exercised upon us. Whoever partakes of that salvation which was purchased by the surety, or have lost it by their negligence, impenitency, and unbelief, there the second person is to be judge. In the former the Son could not be our judge, for then he would be our judge and party too, and then the plea of those heretics would have more countenance of reason. In the business of redemption the Son could not judge, because he made himself a party for our good, and stood in our room and place, and the same party cannot give and take the satisfaction, that cannot be; therefore this order is constituted in this glorious mystery of the Godhead, that the satisfaction is tendered to the Father, he pleads and represents himself to the Father in our behalf. And the Holy Ghost cannot be the judge, for in this mystery he hath another part and function and office, he being the third person in order of subsisting.

(3dly.) In the Son there is a double relation or consideration; one as he is God, and the other as he is mediator; the one natural and eternal, which shall endure for ever, the other which he took upon himself in time, and which in the consummation of time he shall at length lay aside. In the former respect, as God, so Christ is judge with the Father and Spirit, as by original authority; but in this latter respect, as Christ is mediator, he is judge by deputation. The primitive sovereignty belongs to God as supreme king, and the judge by derivation and deputation is the Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator, in his manhood united to the second person of the godhead; so the judgment of the world is put upon him. In regard of the creature, as to us, his authority is absolute and supreme; but in regard of God it is deputed; so he is ordained and appointed to be judge. The scripture delights much in this notion, John v. 27. He hath power of life and death, to condemn and absolve; the Father hath given him authority, as he is the Son of man, Acts x. 42. The apostles, when they were to preach, thought it not enough for them to say, God is judge; no, but, ‘He is ordained of God to be judge of quick and dead;’ so Acts xvii. 31, ‘He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.’ In all which Christ acts as the Father’s vicegerent. And after he hath thus judged

the world, as the Father's deputy, then he shall give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 25. So that the right Christ hath as mediator is not merely by creation, nor his essential kingdom common to the Father; but a derivative, subordinate right as mediator, by virtue of his purchase, as he died, rose again, and revived.

(4thly.) This power which belongs to Christ as mediator, is given to him upon these accounts. Partly as a recompense of his humiliation; but chiefly, because it belongs to the fulness of his mediatory office; it is the last act. The kingdom of the mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of God. Now he being appointed by the Father, the last act of his kingly office was to judge the world. This mediator was not only to pay a price to divine justice, not only to separate the redeemed from the world by converting them to God, but he is also to judge devils, and those enemies of his that would not submit to his mediatory kingdom, to judge those enemies out of whose hands he is to free the church. While the world lasts, he is to fight against our enemies, but then to judge them, and cast them into eternal torments, and so to deliver up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24. His office is not full till he hath executed and judged all his enemies.

Secondly. In what nature doth he act and exercise the judgment, either as God, or man, or both? I answer, In both. Christ is the person, not the Father nor the Spirit, and Christ acts it as God-man; the judgment is acted visibly by him in the human nature, seated upon a visible throne, that he may be seen of all and heard of all; therefore Christ is so often, with respect to the judgment, called the Son of man, Mat. xvi. 27, Acts xvii. 31, Mat. xxvi. 64, John v. 27. The judgment must be visible, therefore the judge must be so; and that the world may see him with these eyes, that we may see our Redeemer come in the last day, and see him to our comfort, he that is withdrawn into the curtain of the heavens, he that is gone about his ministration before God, must come out and bless the people; and therefore, that he may be seen and heard of all, though the divine power be mightily seen, yet he is to act it in the human nature.

Use of all. (1.) This speaks terror to the wicked. (2.) Comfort to the godly.

1. Terror to the wicked. Here let us see—

[1.] Who are those wicked ones, to whom this terror belongeth.

[2.] What is it that maketh it so terrible to them, and will breed horror and trembling in their hearts, if they repent not.

(1.) All those that have opposed his kingdom in the world: Luke xix. 27, 'Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before me.' These oppose the great design of the gospel, which is to set up the Lord Jesus as king.

(2.) All that set light by his person in the day of his grace: and though they do not oppose his government, yet refuse it: Ps. lxxxi. 11, 'My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.'

(3.) All that despise his benefits, and neglect to seek after them: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Christ's benefits are God's favour and image. To have low thoughts of these is to have low thoughts of the blood of Christ: 1 Peter i. 18, 'Ye were

not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;’ and Heb. x. 29, ‘Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?’

(4.) All that abuse his grace, and turn it to wantonness : Jude 4, ‘For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Those that grow less humble, less holy, less careful, upon the account of grace.

(5.) All that break his commandments : John xv. 10, ‘If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.’ Others are reckoned for enemies : Col. i. 21, ‘Enemies in your mind by wicked works;’ and Ps. Ixviii. 21, ‘God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.’

(6.) Those that question the truth of his promises : 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, ‘Knowing this, first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts; and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?’ And they shall know the truth of them to their bitter cost ; that Christ will come, and come as judge.

(7.) Those that have perverted his ordinances : Mat. xxiv. 48—51, ‘But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken : the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ He that maligneth, envieth, traduceth, and injureth, to his power, his most painful, faithful followers and servants, that strengtheneth the hands of the wicked, and encourageth them against the most serious, whom he seeketh to oppress, shall be most severely punished.

[2.] What is it that is so terrible ?

(1.) He is such a judge as the power of the most powerful cannot daunt ; but they shall be all daunted by him : Rev. vi. 15, 16, ‘The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?’

(2.) Such a judge as the wealth of the wealthiest cannot bribe. What compensation can they bring Christ for the breach of his laws ? Mat. xvi. 26, ‘What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?’

(3.) He is such a judge as the wit and subtlety of the wisest and most subtle cannot delude : 1 Cor. iv. 5, ‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart,’

&c.; and Jude 15, 'To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodilily committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him ;' and Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself : But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.'

(4.) Such a judge that there is no appealing from his sentence, or hope of repealing of it : his doom shall stand for ever. In the world there is liberty of appeal from one court to another, where there may be a violent perverting of judgment; as Eccles. v. 8, 'If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter. For he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' But this sentence is definitive.

(5.) He is a judge whose wrath is very terrible: Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little : Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

Well then, the wicked that oppose his kingdom, and all that stand by as unconcerned, and do not enter into his covenant, they shall be judged by him, in whom they have not believed ; by him, whom they have slighted ; by him, whose grace and mercy they have despised ; by him, of whom they have said in their hearts, We will not have this man to reign over us.

2. Here is comfort to the godly. Here I shall show—

[1.] Who may take comfort. Or to whom this comfort belongeth.

[2.] What comfort there is.

(1.) Who? Believers, that believe his doctrine : John xi. 25, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' That receive his person : John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God : even to them that believe on his name.' That enter into covenant with him, and so become members of his mystical body, who, feeling their misery under sin and Satan and the wrath of God, and do believe what Christ hath done and suffered for man's restoration and salvation, thankfully accept him as their only Saviour and Lord, on the terms offered in the gospel, and to those ends ; even to justify, sanctify, and bring them to everlasting glory,—these are owned and accepted by him.

(2.) As by their faith, so by their love : Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity :' and 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' They love him above their lives ; he is the desire and delight of their souls : Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee ? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' They have longed for this day, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'They love his appearing. The thoughts of it was their solace in their afflictions.'

(3.) Those that war against his enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh : Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'

(4.) Those that obey his laws and imitate his example : 1 John ii. 28, ‘And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.’ And 1 John iv. 17, ‘Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.’

[2.] What is the comfort that they have?

(1.) The judge is their friend, their kinsman, their brother, their high priest, to make atonement for them, the propitiation for their sins, their advocate and intercessor, one that died for them.

(2.) He cometh to lead them to their everlasting mansions. Christ is a pattern of what shall be done to them. He rose from the dead, and is become ‘the first fruits of them that slept.’ He now ‘sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for them.’ And ‘he will come again, and receive them to himself. That they may be where he is, and behold his glory.’

SERMON XV.

*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.—
2 COR. v. 10.*

We have handled—1. The necessity; 2. The universality; 3. The judge; 4. The manner of judging. This last we are now upon. The word *φανερωθῆναι* signifieth both to appear and to be made manifest. We may conjoin the senses; we must so appear, as to be made manifest.

First. To appear; that *we must all appear*, every individual person. Four things evince that,—

1. The wisdom and the justice of the judge.
2. The power, impartiality and faithfulness of his ministers.
3. The nature of the business requireth an appearance.
4. The ends of the judgment.

1. The wisdom and justice of the judge. Such is his wisdom and perspicuity, that not one sinner or sin can escape him : Heb. iv. 13, ‘There is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.’ This scripture informeth us of the perfect knowledge of God, as he is a judge, without which his judgment cannot be just and perfect; he knoweth all the persons and causes of men that are brought before him. All things in general, and every thing in particular, are manifest to him, fully, clearly, and evidently discovered to him : Ps. lxix. 5, ‘O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee.’ He is neither ignorant of man, nor anything in man, who must have to do with him, that is to be judged by him. So Jer. xvii. 10, ‘I, the Lord, search the heart and try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and the fruit of his own doing.’ The force of the reason is this: that seeing we must be

judged by a most exact, impartial and all-knowing judge, there can be no hope of lying hid in the throng, or escaping and avoiding the judgment. It concerneth the judge of the world to do right, which he cannot do, unless all sins and persons be manifest to him, that he may render to every one according to his deeds.

2. The power, impartiality and faithfulness of his ministers, who are the holy angels. Much of the work of that day is despatched by the ministry of angels: Mat. xxiv. 31, ‘They shall gather the elect from the four winds.’ In the particular judgment they have a ministry; they convey the souls of men to Christ: Luke xvi. 22, ‘Carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.’ They that carried their souls to heaven, shall be employed in bringing their bodies out of their graves. Now this ministry is not confined to the elect only; they do not only carry the corn into the barn, but the tares into the furnace: Mat. xiii. 39–41, ‘And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ It is the angels’ work to separate the wicked from the godly, to bind up the tares in bundles, that they may be burnt in the fire. They force and present wicked men before the judge, be they never so unwilling and obstinate. So in the parable of the drag-net, Mat. xiii. 49, 50, ‘So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ There is a mixture unavoidable of good and bad in the church, but then a perfect separation by the ministry of angels.

3. The nature of the business requireth our appearance. Partly, because in a regular judgment no man can be judged in his absence. Therefore in this great and solemn judgment we must stand as persons impleaded to hear what is alleged, and what we can say in our defence. David saith, Ps. cxxx. 3, ‘If thou shouldest mark our iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?’ that is, appear in the judgment, so as to be able to make a defence. So, Ps. i. 5, ‘The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment;’ that is, the wicked shall not be able to abide the trial, have nothing to plead for themselves in the day of their final doom. And yet it is said, Rom. xiv. 10, ‘We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ We shall stand and not stand; stand, that is, make an appearance; and not stand, not able to make any just defence. Festus saith, Acts xxv. 16, ‘It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.’ This was *jus gentium*, not to give sentence of capital punishment against any man till he were fully heard. Their rule was, they condemned no man unheard. Surely there is all right in this solemn judgment; he that is to be judged is to be brought into the judgment. When God arraigned our first parents (which is a type of the general judgment), he called Adam *coram*; Gen. iii. 9, 10, ‘Adam, where art thou?’ He brought him

out of his lurking-hole where he had hid himself ; he must come into his presence and answer. And partly, because we cannot appear by a proctor. The sentence is a sentence of life and death, and there is no reason or cause of absence : Rom. xiv. 12, ‘Every one must give an account of himself to God.’ Now in the day of God’s patience we have an advocate who appeareth for us, Heb. ix. 24. He doth prevent wrath, represent our wants, and recommend our affairs. But now the judge cometh to deal with every one in person.

4. The ends of the judgment require our appearance. They are two : (1.) The conviction of the parties judged. God will go upon clear evidence, and they shall have a fair hearing. When there was but one that came without a wedding garment, and he was examined, the man was speechless, Mat. xxii. 12. When every one is particularly observed and tried, there is nothing to reply, but glorifying God, Jude 15. (2.) Satisfaction of the world in the righteousness and justice of God’s proceeding. When every person is arraigned and every work is manifest, it cleareth God’s justice in rewarding his own, and in punishing the wicked and ungodly ; it cleareth his justice in rewarding the faithful ; they undergo the trial, and though they have failings, yet for the main their faith is found to ‘praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ,’ 1 Peter i. 7. When his people come to be judged, and have been found obedient to his commands, faithful under trials, patient under all sufferings and inconveniences, it is a faith that may be owned before men and angels. Christ will confess them before God, men and angels, Rev. iii. 5. So in punishing the wicked : Josh. vii. 19. God is glorified by the creature’s conviction and acknowledgment : Ps. li. 4, ‘I acknowledge mine iniquity, that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.’ God is justified when the creature is rewarded according to his own deservings. God overcometh, and we are cast in the plea and suit.

Secondly. The word signifieth to be made manifest ; and so importeth that we must all be manifested or laid open before the judgment-seat of Christ ; our persons must not only appear, but our hearts and ways be tried. It is said, Luke xii. 2, ‘There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid, which shall not be made known.’ It is brought as a reason against hypocrisy ; the innocence of God’s servants is beclouded for a while, and the sin of men lieth hid for a while, but at length all shall be open, hypocrisy shall be disclosed, and sincerity shall be rewarded. So 1 Cor. iii. 13, ‘Every man’s work shall be manifested.’ All the ways and works of wickedness, though acted in ever so secret a manner, shall be laid open. The scripture telleth us, at the judgment, Eccles. xii. 14, ‘God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.’ The final doom shall repeal all the judgments of this life, and repair them abundantly ; many things that are varnished with a fair gloss and pretence here, shall then be found filthy and abominable ; and many things disguised with an ill appearance to the world, shall be found to be of God, approved and allowed by him. So it is said, 1 Cor. iv. 5, ‘That Christ will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the

heart; and then shall every man have praise of God.' When every man's intentions and purposes, actions and spring of actions shall be displayed, then they that deserve blame shall be discovered, and the sincere and upright justified and commended. Well then, the scripture shows they shall be made manifest, and when made manifest. In the general there are two places demonstrate it; one is Ps. l. 21, 'I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes.' All the ways and circumstances of sin shall be so represented to the conscience, that the sinner shall not be able to deny or excuse, evade or forget, but ever be vexed with the remembrance of his past folly, and ever see his sins before him as if fresh committed. The other place is Rev. xii. 12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the Lord, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' There are books, and another book; there is the book of conscience and the book of God's remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. In these books all things are written which belong to the government and judgment of the rational creature, our good and evil is all upon record, our means and mercies, and our unthankfulness and unprofitableness under them: Jer. xvii. 1, 'The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond;' not only in their consciences, but before God: Isa. lxv. 6, 'Behold it is written before me.' God doth not forget, or pass over, but note and remember. Now these books are opened at the last day; there is not one book, but books; the book of scripture is opened as a rule, the book of conscience as a witness, and the book of God's remembrance as the notice, or judge's knowing both persons and facts. But, more particularly, how are we manifested?

1. By the knowledge of the judge. We may hide our sins from men, but not from God; from the world, and from ourselves, but Christ shall perfectly discover them, and bring them forth unto the light, and show themselves to themselves, and to the world, and all their shifts will not serve the turn. God observeth men now, and observeth them in order to judgment: Ps. xxxiii. 13-16, 'The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men from the place of his habitation; he beholdeth all the inhabitants of the earth; he fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their thoughts.' Though God resides in heaven, yet he beholdeth all and every of their actions, yea, their most secret thoughts; he fashioneth their hearts alike (Sept., one by one); he is the former of their souls as well as their bodies, and knoweth the operations of their hearts as well as their outward actions. Men think otherwise: Ezek. ix. 9, 'They say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth; the Lord seeth not.' When he came to mark the mourners, and to distinguish them from the sinners. Ps. xciv. 7, 'They say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' These are men's brutish, atheistical thoughts, and so go on and are regardless of the judgment. But then your judge shall convince you upon his own knowledge. A judge is not disabled from being a witness. The woman of Samaria said, John. iv. 29, 'Come and see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?' Christ knoweth all that men do, and is able to produce their lives by tale and number,

even those passages which were most secret ; there needeth no proof to our judge ; for all is open and naked before him.

2. The good angels may be produced as witnesses ; they have an inspection over this lower world, are conversant about us in all our ways, and are conscious to our conversations : Ps. xci. 11, ' He shall give his angels charge over thee ; they shall keep thee in all thy ways.' Reverence is pressed upon us in scripture in this respect : Eccles. v. 6, ' Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin ; neither say thou before the angel, It was an error.' All the business is, what is meant by the angel. There, some understand it of the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, who will not be mocked, who cannot be deceived. But why not of the angels in heaven, who are sent forth for the good of the elect, and observe our behaviour, and who stop us in our sins, as the angel did Balaam, who said, It is an error ? See Numb. xxii. 34; so 1 Tim. v. 21, ' I charge thee before the elect angels.' Surely the angels observe our actions ; they are sent abroad in the world as the spies and intelligencers of heaven. So they attend upon congregations : 1 Cor. xi. 10, ' For this cause ought a woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.' In assemblies for worship more company meeteth than is visible. Devils and angels meet there : devils, to divert your minds as soon as you begin to be serious, to snatch the good word out of your hearts ; angels, to observe you ; therefore there should be no indecency.

3. Devils may accuse men in that day. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren. The fathers bring him in pleading thus against the sinner, *Domine, sit meus per culpam, qui tuus esse noluit per gratiam* ; I never died for him, could promise him no heavenly kingdom, but a little sensitive pleasure ; *Ostende tuos tales numerarios, O Christe, &c.*

4. Sometimes the word of God is made to be our accuser : John v. 45, ' Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father ; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust ;' that is, Moses' law would accuse and condemn them ; Christ needeth not to bring his complaint and indictment against them. And it teacheth us this truth, that where men remain in their impenitency and unbelief, both law and gospel, God's justice and mercy, our own consciences, the Spirit resisted by them in his moral suasions, messengers, means, pains taken on them, will all contribute to make up an accusation against a sinner before the tribunal of Christ. So John xii. 48, ' He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him ; the word that I have spoken shall judge him at the last day.' The word of the gospel delivered by Christ, that will judge them. Though there were no other witnesses, yet the grace of God in the word will show their condemnation to be just, because of their contempt and neglect. Believers or unbelievers may know their doom beforehand by the word. So Mat. xii. 41, 42, ' The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment against this generation, and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. So, the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the

uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.' The means that we have enjoyed shall be produced, and aggravate the judgment against the neglecters and despisers of the Lord's grace. There was a greater manifestation of God in Christ than Solomon; a greater confirmation in Christ's resurrection and infusion of the Spirit, than in Jonah's being delivered out of the whale's belly.

5. The ministers of the gospel. Their diligence and faithful inculcation of the doctrine of life maketh up a part of the evidence which is produced to convince sinners: Mat. xxiv. 14, 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations,' first *to* them, and then *against* them, compared with Mark. xiii. 9. The preaching of the word will be a witness that men had warning, enough, but that they unthankfully neglected their opportunity, and did cast away their own mercies: so Mark. vi. 11, 'Shake off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them.' That signified what a crying sin, and what a punishment, did attend them that contemned the messages of salvation sent them by God. It is not only a testimony before God for the present; but compare Mat. x. 14, 15, 'Shake off the dust of your feet,' and 'it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment.' This sheweth you are free of their blood, and if there be no other witnesses, this dust shall witness it.

6. Conscience itself shall witness against them, and God will discover ourselves to ourselves, that we shall see the judgment is just. As long as men have any tenderness, conscience speaketh now, but by custom in sinning men stop the mouth of it. But when it speaketh not, it writeth many times; for the present it is silent, and seemeth to take no notice of the sins we commit, but they are all registered, and they appear legible. The sad story of our lives is all engraven upon the heart, and when God awaketh the conscience, it is all sin. God will open our eyes, not by a holy illumination, but by a forced conviction: Rev. xx. 12, 'The books were opened,' and one of these books is conscience, and though it be in the sinner's keeping, yet it cannot be so blurred and defaced, but our story will be legible enough, and forgotten sins will stare us in the face: Num. xxxii. 23, 'And be sure your sins shall find you out.' We forget them now, think we shall never hear of them more; but God can make all occur to memory as fresh as if newly committed, and in an instant represent the story of an ill-spent life, and show us all the thoughts, words, and actions, that ever we have been guilty of. The paper goeth white into the printing-house, but within one instant it is marked within and without, and cometh forth stamped with words, and lines, and sentences, which were no way legible there before.

7. It will be made evident by the confession of offenders themselves. As their consciences will convince them, so their own tongues will accuse them then; as men now in the ravings of despair will vomit up their own shame: as Judas, Mat. xxvii. 4, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood'; and Jer. xvii. 9, 'At his latter end he shall be a fool;' crying out, Oh, fool! Oh, madman! So much more then God can easily, and without other evidence, convince men

by themselves, and make them accuse themselves ; he can judge them out of their own mouths, Luke. xix. 12 ; produce evidence against them out of their own thoughts, and pronounce sentence against them out of their own consciences, Rom. ii. 15 ; make men's tongues to fall upon them, Ps. lxiv. 8. He can indeed make use of us, and all that is in us, for his own glory, as having power to do with us what he will ; and it is much for his honour when he maketh us witnesses against ourselves.

8. Wicked men shall accuse one another. In the arraignment of Adam and Eve, which I take for a notable presignification of the general judgment, they transfer it upon one another ; the man upon the woman : Gen. iii. 12, ‘The woman whom thou gavest to be with me ;’ and the woman upon the serpent : ‘The serpent beguiled me,’ ver. 13. So those that draw one another into sin, or are drawn by them, will impeach one another.

9. The godly will be brought in as one evidence, to make them manifest, partly as they endeavoured to do them good : Heb. xi. 7, ‘Noah condemned the world ;’ and ‘the saints shall judge the world,’ 1 Cor. vi. 2 ; now by their conversations, hereafter by their vote and suffrage. And partly as they might receive good from them ; as the godly relieved ; Luke xvi. 9, and neglected, Mat. xxv. ; as they might have been visited, and clothed ; the loins of the poor blessed Job, chap. xxxi. 29.

10. The circumstances of their evil actions : James v. 3, ‘Your gold and silver is cankered ; the rust of them shall be a witness against you.’ The circumstances of your sinful actions shall be brought forth as arguments of conviction : Hab. ii. 11, ‘The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.’ Though none durst complain of oppressors, yet the materials of their buildings shall witness against them—kind of antiphony heard by God’s justice. The stones of the wall shall cry, ‘Lord, we were built by rapine and violence ;’ the beam shall answer, ‘True, Lord, even so it is ;’ the stones shall cry, ‘Vengeance, Lord, upon our ungodly owner ;’ and the beam shall answer, ‘Woe to him, because his house was built with blood ;’ though all should be silent, yet the stones will not hold their peace.

Use 1. If we must appear so as to be made manifest, oh, then, let us take heed of secret sin, and make conscience of avoiding it, as well as that which is open, for in time it will be laid open. Achan was found out in his sacrilege, how secretly soever he carried it, Josh. viii. ; Ananias and Sapphira’s sacrilege in keeping back part of what was dedicated to God, Acts v ; Gehazi in affecting a bribe : 1 Kings v. 26, ‘Went not my spirit with thee ?’ meaning his prophetic spirit. Doth not God see, and will not he require it ? Alas, we many times make conscience of acts, but not of thoughts ; and yet, according to Christ’s theology, malice is heart-murder, lustful inclinations are heart-adultery, proud imaginations are heart-idolatry, and there may be a great deal of evil in discontented thoughts, and repinings against providence, Ps. lxxiii. 22. Shall we repent of nothing but what man seeth ? Eph. v. 12, ‘It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.’ A serious christian is ashamed to speak of what secure persons are not ashamed to practise ; if they can hide it from men, the all seeing-eye of God layeth no restraint upon them ; unclean-

ness usually affecteth a veil of secrecy, ‘but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,’ Heb. xiii. 4. It is said God will judge them, because usually this sin is carried so closely and craftily, that none but God can find them out; but certainly God will find them out; none can escape God’s discovery, all things are naked in his sight. Let no man then embolden himself to have his hand in any sin, in hopes to hide his ‘counsel deep from the Lord, and his works in the dark,’ Isa. xxix. 15. God knoweth the thoughts of the heart afar off; and Ps. cxxxix. 2, ‘Whither shall I go from thy presence, and whither shall I fly from thy Spirit?’ God knew what the king of Assyria spake in his secret chamber, 2 Kings vi. 12; knew the secret thoughts of Herod’s heart, which it is probable he never uttered to his nearest friends, concerning the murdering of Christ, Mat. ii. 13. But to end this, consider the aggravations of these sins that are secret and hidden, although to be an open and bold sinner is in some respects more than to be a close, private sinner, because of the dishonour done to God, and scandal to others, and impudency in the sinner himself, yet also in other respects secret sins have their aggravations.

1. The man is conscious to himself that he doth evil; therefore seeketh a veil and covering, would not have the world know it. If open sins be of greater infamy, yet secret sins are more against knowledge and conviction. To sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a dreadful thing, James iv. 17. You live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close; this is to rebel against the light, and to stop the mouth of conscience, which is awakened within thee.

2. This secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than God, and is palliated atheism. What, unjust in secret! unclean in secret! envious in secret! disclaim against God’s children in secret! neglect duties in secret! sensual in secret! Oh, then, wicked wretch, thou art afraid men should know it, and art not afraid God should know it. What, afraid of the eyes of man; and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldest not have a child see thee do that which God seeth thee to do. A thief is ashamed when he is found, Jer. ii. Can man damn thee? can man fill thy conscience with terrors? can man bid thee depart into everlasting burnings? why then, art thou afraid of man, and not of God?

3. The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more studious and industrious about it, how to contrive it, and bring it about; as David plotted Uriah’s death. And Joshua vii. 11, ‘They have stolen and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stuff.’ And, Acts v. 9, ‘How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of God?’ In secret sins there is much premeditation and craft and dissimulation used.

Use 2. Is to show the folly of them who rather take care to hide their sins than get them pardoned.

1. God hath promised pardon to an open confession of sin: Prov. xxviii. 13, ‘He that hideth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.’ He hath promised it in mercy, but bound himself to perform it in righteousness: 1 John i. 9, ‘If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive

them.' David pleadeth it: Ps. li. 3, 'Cleanse me from my secret sin, for I acknowledge my transgression.' And God doth certainly perform it to his children. When David said, 'I have sinned,' 2 Sam. xii. 13, 'against the Lord, Nathan said, the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.' And this he acknowledged with thankfulness: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I would confess, and thou forgavest.' This is the right course which men should take, confess their sin with grief and shame and reformation; we have not our *quietus est* till this be done.

2. Notwithstanding all this, man naturally loveth to hide and cover his sin: Job xxxi. 33, 'If I have covered my transgression, as did Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.' *More hominum*—so Junius: Hos. vi. 7, 'They like men have transgressed the covenant.' It is in the Hebrew 'like Adam,' or Adam's name is mentioned, because we show ourselves to be like Adam's race by hiding and excusing our sin. First, from men we hide them, as Saul dealeth with Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 13–15, Gehazi with Elisha, Ananias and Sapphira with Peter, Acts v. 8. They heap up sin upon sin to hide former sins; this cometh from their pride, joined with some degree of atheism; they care not how deep they run into guilt, so they may avoid shame and infamy. Or else, secondly, from ourselves. A man seeketh to hide his sin from himself out of self-love, lest their carnal peace should be disturbed, and Satan letteth them alone that they may not discover the right way, how they may recover themselves out of his snares; and out of love and affection to sin we 'roll it as a sweet morsel in our mouth, and hide it under our tongue,' Job xx. 12, 13. They are willing to retain it still; as Abraham was unwilling to put away Ishmael, whom he loved, Gen. xxi. 11; and therefore see not what we do see, loath to find themselves in a state of wrath, or obnoxious to eternal death. Therefore we all need to pray, Ps. xix. 12, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' There are many secret sins through ignorance, inadvertency, partiality or self-love, not taken notice of. Thirdly, from God, which is worst of all. We all desire to hide our sins, and could wish they might be unknown unto him, yea, endeavour it. Thus Adam hid himself when God came into the garden; when he could shift no longer he transferreth his fault upon Eve, and obliquely upon God himself, Gen. iii.; and Cain, Gen. iv., beareth it out to God, first with a plain lie, afterwards with a bold answer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

But is there any such disposition in the children of God? Yes; David kept silence, Ps. xxxii. 3. Moses pleadeth not the main till God toucheth his privy sore; he pleadeth other excuses, but the fear of his life was the main thing. It is a hard thing to bring the soul to deal openly and ingenuously with God, to draw forth the sin with its circumstances, and lay it before the Lord, who knoweth it already.

3. This is folly, and a degree of atheism. We can never hide our sins nor our persons, for we must be made manifest at the last day. God cannot be resisted, nor escaped, nor entreated, nor endured, nor resisted: Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, and would burn them together,' no more than briars and thorns can resist a devouring flame. Nor escaped: Jer. xxv. 35, 'And the shepherd shall have no way to flee,

nor the principal of the flock to escape:’ so Ps. cxxxix. 7, ‘Whither shall I flee from thy presence?’ You flee from God as a friend, to God as an enemy. Nor entreat him: 1 Sam. ii. 25, ‘If one man sin against another, the judge must judge him; but if a man sin against God, who shall entreat for him?’ Nor endured, Isa. xxxiii. 14, ‘The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burning?’ And Ezek. xxii. 14, ‘Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?’ Well then, if men will not now draw nigh unto God, God will find them out in their sins, and bring them into judgment before him. Since he cannot be blinded, nor resisted, our best way is to take hold of his strength, and make our peace with him, Isa. xxvii. 5. ‘Agree with thine adversary while he is in the way.’ Better come in voluntarily than be dragged by force—come humbly, as Benhadad’s servants, with ropes about their necks, 1 Kings xx. 32. David found more comfort in submission to God, than in standing out against him.

SERMON XVI.

*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ—
2 COR. v. 10.*

I COME now to the fifth circumstance in the text, and that is the cause or matter to be tried, and about which we must be judged.

1. Generally expressed, $\tau\alpha\ \deltaia\ tōū\ σώματος$ —the things done in the body.

2. Distributed into their several kinds; whether we have done good or evil.

Doct. That every man’s judgment shall proceed according to what he hath done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad.

This is confirmed by other scriptures: Mat. xvi. 27, ‘The Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels; and men shall be rewarded every man according to his works;’ so Rev. xx. 12, ‘And they were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.’

Here I shall inquire—

1. Why works are produced.

2. How they are considered in the sentence and doom that passeth upon every man.

3. What room and place they have with respect to punishment and reward.

First, Why works are produced—and whenever the judgment is spoken of some clause is inserted which mentioneth works, or relateth to them.

I answer, this is the fittest way to glorify God, and convince the creature, which are the two ends of the judgment, and are most promoted by giving them the fruit of their doings, whether good or evil.

1. For the glory of God. At that day God will glorify his holiness, justice and truth, yea also his free love and mercy ; the veil is to be taken away, and all this at that day is to be made matter of sense.

[1.] The holiness of God. The holy God delighteth in holiness and holy persons, and hateth sin and the workers of iniquity. Both parts of his holiness are spoken of in scripture, his delight in holy things and persons, Prov. ii. 20. The upright are his delight, and their services, Prov. x. 8. Can we imagine that God should bid the saints love one another, and count them the excellent ones upon earth, Ps. xvi. 3, how poor soever and despicable they be as to their outward condition, and that he himself should not love them the more, and delight in the reflection of his own image upon them ? On the other side, his detestation of sin and sinners : Hab. i. 13, ‘Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ;’ and Ps. v. 4, ‘Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness.’ We that have but a drop of the divine nature, hate not only sin, but sinners : 2 Peter ii. 8, ‘Lot, his righteous soul was vexed with their impure conversations.’ Well then, can we imagine without a manifest reproach to the divine nature, that God should be indifferent to good and evil, and the saints should not be more lovely in his sight for their holiness, and the wicked hateful for their sins ? Therefore now, when all is to be discovered and made obvious to sense, it is a delight to him to reward the graces and services of his people, and to show how pleasing and acceptable they are to him ; the more holy, the more lovely objects of his sight. And on the other side, he will show his hatred against sin and sinners, in their sentence and punishment ; and so by necessary consequence, their different works must come into consideration, that the holy may have their due praise and commendation, and the wicked, their just reproof from the judge of the world.

[2.] His remunerative justice. There is a threefold justice in God ; his general justice, his strict justice, his justice of benignity or fidelity, according to his gospel-law. (1.) His general justice requireth that there should be a different proceeding among them that differ among themselves ; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown, whether he hath been sowing to the flesh or to the spirit, that the fruit of his doings should be given into his bosom. And therefore, though this be not evident in this life, where good and evil is promiscuously dispensed, because now is the time of God’s patience and our trial, yet in the life to come, when God will ‘judge the world in righteousness,’ Acts xvii. 31, it is necessary that it should go well with the good, and ill with the bad. And as the apostle saith, 2 Thes. i. 6, 7, ‘It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.’ There is *generalis ratio justi*, in the difference of the recompenses, and therefore the different actions of the persons to be judged, must come into the discussion, whether good or evil. (2.) There is God’s strict justice declared in the covenant of works, whereby he rewardeth man according to his perfect obedience, or else punisheth him for his failings and coming short. This also is in part to be declared at the day of judgment, on the wicked at least ; for the apostle declareth that there will be a different proceeding with men, according to the divers

covenants which they are under; some shall be judged by the law of liberty, according to which God will accept their sincere though imperfect obedience; others shall have judgment, without any temperament of mercy, James ii. 12, 13; and justly, because they never changed copy and tenure. When God made man he gave him a law, suitable to that perfection and innocency wherein he made him. Our act did not make void his right to require the obedience due by that law, nor our obligation to perform it; but yet because man was incapable of performing this law or obtaining righteousness by it, having once broken it, he was pleased to cast out a plank to us after shipwreck, to offer us the remedy of a new law of grace, wherein he required of us ‘repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,’ Acts xx. 21; that we should return to our duty to our creator, depending upon the merit, satisfaction, and power of the mediator. Now we are all sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of nature, and woe and wrath a hundred times over; and if through our impenitency and unbelief, we will not accept of God’s remedy, we are justly left to the old covenant, under which we were born, and so undergo judgment without mercy. (3.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence, as judging according to his gospel-law, which accepteth of sincere obedience; and so God is just, when he rewardeth a man capable of reward upon terms of grace; so it is said, Heb. vi. 10, ‘God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of love, which ye have showed to his name.’ His promises take notice of works, and the fruits of faith and love, as one part of our qualification, which make us capable of the blessings promised.

[3.] His veracity and faithfulness. God hath promised life and glory to the penitent and obedient, and the faithful. And God will make good his promises, and reward all the labours, and patience, and faithfulness of his servants, according to his promises to them. To whom hath he promised salvation? To the obedient, to the patient, to the pure in heart, to the diligent and studious, everywhere in the word of God: John xii. 26, ‘There shall my servant be;’ James i. 12, and Rom. ii. 6, 7, ‘He will render to every one according to his deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, immortality, eternal life.’ On the contrary he hath interminated and threatened: vers. 8, 9, ‘To them that are contentious, and obey not the truth,’ who wrangle and dispute away duty. See promises mixed with threatenings, to the carnal and the mortified: Rom. viii. 13, ‘If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;’ and Gal. vi. 8, ‘If ye sow to the flesh, of the flesh ye shall reap corruption; but if ye sow to the spirit, ye shall reap life everlasting.’ Now that God’s truth may fully appear, men’s works must be brought into the trial.

[4.] His free grace. The business of that day is not only to glorify his justice, but to glorify his free love and mercy: 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Hope unto the end for the grace that is to be brought to you, at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ And this grace is no way infringed, but the rather exalted, when what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil, is brought into the judgment.

(1.) The evil works of the faithful show that every one is worthy of

death for sinning, though we do not die and perish everlasting for it as others do. God's best saints have need to deprecate his strict judgment: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; ' he doth not say with thine enemy, but thy servant. They that can continue with most patience in well-doing, have nothing to look for at last but mercy, Jude 21. It is their best plea: Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' When we have done and suffered ever so much for God, we must at length take eternal life as a gift out of the hands of our Redeemer; but for the grace of the new covenant, we might have perished as others do. In some measure we see grace here, but never so fully and perfectly as then. Partly, because now we have not so full a view of our unworthiness as when our actions are scanned and all brought to light. And partly, because there is not so full and large manifestation of God's favour now, as there is in our full and final reward. It is grace now, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and to take us into his family, and give us some taste of his love, and a right to the heavenly kingdom; but then it is another manner of grace and favour; then our pardon shall be pronounced by our judge's own mouth, and he shall not only take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and heavenly palace; not only give us right, but possession, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you; ' and shall have not only some remote service and ministration, but be everlasting employed in loving and delighting in, and praising of God; this is grace indeed. The grace of God, or his free favour to sinners, is never seen in all its glory or graciousness till then.

(2.) The good which the faithful do is very imperfect, and mixed with many weaknesses and infirmities; it may endure the touchstone, but it cannot endure the balance, as we shall find then, when our righteous judge shall compare our best actions with his holy law. After we repented and believed, and returned to the obedience of God, the Lord knoweth our righteousness is as filthy rags, and our best robes need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Sin is our nakedness, and graces are our garments.

(3.) Though it were never so perfect, yet it merits nothing by its own intrinsic worth at God's hands: 'When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants,' Luke xvii. 10. And paying a due debt deserveth no reward; it is a grace bestowed upon us, that we can do anything for God, 2 Cor. viii. 1; and services and sufferings bear no equality with the reward, Rom. viii. 18; and all is done by those that did once deserve eternal death, Rom. vi. 17, 18; and were redeemed and recovered out of that misery by an infinite grace, 1 Peter i. 18, 19; and already appointed heirs of eternal life before we serve him, Rom. viii. 17, by his precedent elective love. In short, they that continually need to implore the mercy of God for the pardon of sin, and cannot oblige God by any work of theirs, must needs admire grace; and the more grace is discovered to them, and they discovered to themselves, the more they will do so.

2. The other end of the judgment is to convince the creature, and that is best done by bringing our works, whether good or evil, into the judgment. If only the purposes of God were manifested, the con-

demned would have a just exception, and their cavils would be justified, that it was long of God they were not saved. Man is apt to charge God wrongfully: Prov. ix. 3, ‘The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.’ Whatever exceptions men have against God now, then all is clear, their works are produced, their own evil choice and course. If the grace of the Redeemer were only produced, those who are excluded from the benefit might seem to tax the proceeding as arbitrary, and the whole business would seem to be a matter of favour, and not of justice. But when their destruction is of themselves, there is no cause of complaint; if only the good estate of men were considered, there would not be such an open vindication of God’s righteous dealing. In any judgment, all things are rightly and convincingly carried, when the judge doth proceed *secundum regulas juris, et secundum allegata et probata*—according to the law as a rule, and according to the things alleged and proved, as to the application of the rule to the parties judged. Now the producing of the things done in the body, whether good or evil, suiteth with both these, and so in the day of judgment there is a right course taken for convincing the creature.

[1.] The judge must keep close to the law as his rule, for the absolving or acquitting of the parties impleaded. So it belongeth to Christ, as a judge, to determine our case according to the law which we are under. We christians are under a double law, of nature and grace. The law of nature bindeth us to love and serve our creator; but because of man’s apostasy, the law of grace findeth out a remedy, of repentance, or returning to our duty after the breach, and faith, or suing out the mercy of God in the name of Jesus Christ. Now those who will not accept of the second covenant, remain under the bond of the first, which exacteth perfect obedience from them, and the judge doth them no wrong, if he judge them according to their works. But now those who have accepted the second covenant, and devoted themselves to God, taking sanctuary at the mercy of their Redeemer, they indeed have a plea against the first covenant; they are sinners, but they are repenting sinners, and believing in Christ. Now their claim must be examined by the judge, whether this penitence and acceptance of grace be sincere and real, whether true penitents and sound believers; that must be seen by our works; and the judge must examine, whether our repentance, and returning to our duty, be verified by our after obedience, and our thankful acceptance of Christ, and doth engage us to constancy and cheerfulness in that obedience. A double accusation may be brought against man before the tribunal of God: that he is a sinner, and so guilty of the breach of the first covenant; or that he is no sound believer, having not fulfilled the condition of the second. As to the first accusation we are justified by faith, as to the second by works; and so James and Paul are reconciled: Rom. iii. 24, ‘A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;’ James ii. 24, ‘A man is justified by works, and not by faith only.’ Every one of us may be considered as a man that liveth in the world, or as a sinner in the state of nature, or as a man called to the grace of God in Christ, or as a christian professing faith in the Redeemer. According to this double relation, there is a double judgment passed upon us, according

to the law, so condemned already ; according to the gospel, so accepted in the beloved. To this double judgment there answereth a double justification : of a sinner, by virtue of the satisfaction of Christ, apprehended by faith, without the works of the law ; of a believer, or one in the state of grace, so justified by works ; for here it is not inquired whether he have satisfied the law, that he may have life by, it but whether, professing himself to be a christian, he be a true believer—and that must be tried by his works ; for as God in the covenant of grace giveth us two benefits, remission of sins and sanctification by the Spirit, so he requireth two duties from us—a thankful acceptance of his grace by faith, and also new obedience, as the fruit of love. Well then, this being so—to wit, that Christ's commission and charge is to give eternal life to true believers, and them only, the only sound mark of true believers is their works of new obedience. These must be tried in the judgment.

[2.] A judge must proceed *secundum alligata et probata*, not to give sentence by guess, but upon the evidence of the fact; therefore Christ, to convince men that they are sinners by the first covenant, or hypocrites, or sincere, by the second, must consider their works. Men's profession must not be taken in the case, but their lives must be considered, for there are christians in the letter, and christians in the spirit, some that have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 5 ; and God doth not respect the outward profession, 1 Peter i. 17. There may be a carnal christian, as well as a carnal heathen ; a man may talk well from his convictions, or a mere disciplinary knowledge; but to do well there needeth a living principle of grace. The scriptures still set forth graces by their operations, works, or fruits ; for a dead sleepy habit is worth nothing. The working faith carrieth away the prize of justification, Gal. v. 6 ; honoureth Christ, 2 Thes. i. 11, 12. The labouring love is that which God will regard and reward, Heb. vi. 10. The lively hope is the fruit of regeneration, 1 Peter i. 5 ; that which sets a-doing, Acts xxiv. 15, 16 ; and Acts xxvi. 7, 8. Grace otherwise cannot appear in the view of conscience. The apples appear when the sap is not seen. It is the operative and lively graces that will discover themselves. A man may think well, or speak well, but that grace which governeth his conversation sheweth itself. God knoweth what is in man, whether faith be sound in the first planting, before any fruit appear. But this judgment is to proceed, not only by the knowledge of the judge, but the evidence of our own consciences, the observation of others, and what openly appeareth in our lives.

Secondly, How these works are considered, with respect to our sentence and doom.

1. Our actions are considered here with respect to the principle from whence they flow, a renewed heart ; God doth not look to the bare work, but to the spring, and motives, and ends, Prov. xvi. 2. He weigheth the spirits, *quo animo*, not only the matter and bulk of the action, but with what spirit, and from what principle it is done : Eph. v. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is all goodness, righteousness and truth ;' whether we act from a principle of grace in the heart. A violent motion differeth from that which floweth from an inward principle.

Christ first giveth a disposition to obey, before there is an actual sincere obedience. And living in the Spirit goeth before walking in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25. The principles are infused, and then the action follows. It is said, John iii. 21, 'He that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' A godly man cannot satisfy himself in some external conformity to the law, but he must know that the actions come from God, from his grace and Spirit in us, and tend to him, that is, to his glory and honour, and are directed according to his will. A little outside holiness will not content Christ.

2. With respect to the state in which they are done. A justified estate, and a state of reconciliation to God; for the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God'; and Rom. vii. 4, 'Married to Christ, that I may bring forth fruit unto God.' The children born before marriage are not legitimate: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' We ought to look to the qualification of our persons, that we be reconciled with God through Christ, daily renewing our friendship with him by sorrow for sin, by suing out our pardon and acceptance in the mediator. The apostle doth not say, How holy ought our conversation to be, but What manner of persons ought we to be.

3. They are considered with respect to their correspondency. No man is judged by one single act; we cannot pass judgment upon our estate before God, whether good or evil, by a few particulars, but by our way, or the ordinary strain of our life and conversation, and our course: Rom. viii. 1, 'Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' A man may occasionally set his foot in a path which he meaneth not to walk in. God in reviewing his work considered every day's work; apart it was good, and considered altogether, Gen. i. 31; the whole frame, and all very good; all the work together was correspondent, and all suitable to the rest in a due proportion; so should we endeavour to imitate God, that all our works, every one of them, and our whole course considered together, may all appear to be good, answerable to one another in order and proportion, that our whole conversations may be a perfect frame of unblamable holiness. There are some amongst men which do some things well, to which their order and carriage is not suitable. The difference between a godly man's work and a hypocrite's lieth in this, a hypocrite's work is best considered apart, a good man's works are best, and most approved, when they are laid together.

4. These works are considered with respect to their aim and scope: Phil. i. 11, 12, 'That we may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.' As it is not the doing one good work, or some few, which will qualify a man for the day of judgment, but being filled with the fruits of righteousness; so it is necessary also that our aim be every way as good as our action, and God's glory be propounded as our great scope. An action in itself good and lawful may be reckoned unto the worker as sin or duty, as the end is, and the scope which he propoundeth unto himself.

5. That none of our actions are lost, but stand upon record, that we may hear of them another day, and tend to increase the general sum, whether good or evil. An impenitent man's account riseth: Rom. ii. 5, 'He treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath,' like Jehoiada's chest, the longer it stood the more treasure was in it. Sins that seem inconsiderable in themselves, yet are the acts of one that hath sinned greatly before. A cipher put to a sum that is fixed increaseth it, every drop helpeth to fill the cup. So in the sincere: Phil. iv. 17, 'Fruit abounding to your account.' Every sincere action makes it abound more; some actions are more inconsiderable than others, yet if done for Christ's sake, shall be taken notice of, though small in themselves: Mat. x. 42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

Thirdly, What room and place these works have, with respect to punishment and reward. There is a plain difference, as appeareth, Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.' The works of the wicked have a proper, meritorious influence upon their ruin and destruction; wicked men stand upon their own bottom, and are left to themselves. We do evil of our own accord, and by our own strength; but the good we do is neither our own, nor is it purely good. Besides, there is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of obedience is still lessened; thereby sin and offence is aggravated; as, for an instance, to strike an officer is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is infinite, and therefore eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the greater God is, and the more glorious, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love him, and serve him, and so that good which we do for his sake is the more due, and God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of the action itself to reward it, for here the greatness of the object lessenneth the action; for be the creature what he will, he oweth his whole self to God, who is placed in such a degree of eminence, that we can lay no obligation upon him; so that he is not bound by his natural justice to reward us, but only inclined so to do by his own goodness, and bound so to do by his free promise and covenant of grace. Aristotle said well, that children could not merit of their parents, and all their kindness and duty they performed, is but a just recompense to them from whom under God they have received their being; for right and merit, strictly taken, is only between those who in a manner are equals. If not between children and parents, certainly not between God and man. Well then, though sin deserveth punishment, yet our good works deserve not their reward. That grace which first accepted us with all our faults, doth still crown us, and bestow all that honour and glory which we expect at Christ's coming.

But what respect then have our works to our reward?

Answer 1. They render us a more capable object of God's delight and approbation. For surely the holy God delighteth in his faithful

servants : Mat. xxv. 21, '*Euge, bone serve.*' Conformity to his nature and will suiteth more with his holiness than sin and disobedience.

2. They qualify us, and make us more capable of the rewards of his gospel covenant, which requireth that we should accept of our Redeemer's mercy, and return to our obedience, and continue in that obedience, that the righteous judge may put the crown upon our heads in that day, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

3. Works are produced as the undoubted evidence of a sound faith ; they are a demonstration, *a signis notioribus*, as most conspicuous, and so fit to justify believers before all the world ; the sprinkling of the blood on the door-posts signifieth there dwell Israelites. So such an uniform course of holiness shows that faith is rooted in them.

4. They are a measure of the degree of the reward ; for, 2 Cor. ix. 6, 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully,' not only glory, but great glory with great measure. So far we may go safely, and less we cannot, unless we would infringe a care of holiness.

Use. Oh then, let us take heed what we do in the body, whether we sow to the flesh or the spirit. Let us be sure that our seed be good, if we would expect a good crop. Now it is seed time, but then is the harvest, works will be inquired after. It is not our voice, but hands ; like as Isaac, 'The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' Nothing will evidence our sincerity, but a uniform, constant course of self-denying obedience.

1. An uniform course it must be. A man may force himself into an act, or two ; Saul in a rapture may be among the prophets. A man is judged by his course and walk. A child of God may be under a strange appearance for an act or so ; you can no more judge of them by that, than you can judge of the glory of a street by a sink or kennel. On the other side, men may take on religion at set times, as men in an ague have their well days, the fit of lust or sin is not always upon them : Ps. cxi. 3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteousness at all times.' When a man's conversation is all of a piece, his course is to please God in all places, and in all things, not by starts, and in good moods : 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.'

An act of voluntary sin is as monstrous as a hen to lay the egg of a crow ; many men's lives speak contradictions. Saul at one time puts all the witches to death, at another time, hath recourse with a witch himself. Jehu showeth his zeal against Ahab's idolatry, but not against Jeroboam's.

2. Constant. There is a strait gate, and a narrow way ; we must enter one, and walk in the other ; there is making covenant, and keeping covenant : Ps. cxii. 18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them ;' Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy shall be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God.' Faith and obedience are conditions of pardon, and constant obedience is a condition of salvation.

3. Self-denyingly acted. Good works are not dear ; 'Be warmed, be

clothed.' In 1 John iii. 16, the apostle speaketh of laying down our life for the brethren, of opening our hands and bowels for refreshing the hungry, and clothing the naked. So proportionably when we take pains to instruct the ignorant, exhort the obstinate, confirm the weak, comfort the afflicted. Do you think that religion lieth only in hearing sermons, in singing psalms, reading a chapter, or in a few drowsy prayers, or cursory devotions? There are the means, but where is the fruit? No; it lieth in self-denying obedience. These are the acts about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment, Mat. xxv., Have you visited, have you clothed, do you own the servants of God when the times frown upon them? Do you relieve them and comfort them in their distresses? Lip-labour and tongue-service is a cheap thing, and that religion is worth nothing which costs nothing, 1 Sam. xxiv. 24. When we deny ourselves, and apparently value God's interest above our own, then our sincerity is most evidenced, and every one of us is to consider what interest God calleth him to deny upon the hopes of glory, and, whatever it costeth us, to be faithful with God. A cheap course of serving God bringeth you none or little comfort. Certainly a man cannot be thorough in religion, but he will be put upon many occasions of denying himself, his ease, profit, honour, and acting contrary to his natural inclinations, or worldly interests. Those that regard only the safe, cheap and easy part, do not set up Christ's religion, but their own—a christianity of their own making: Mat. xvi. 24, 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

SERMON XVII.

That every man may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, good or bad.—2 Cor. v. 10.

THIS receiving relateth either to the sentence or the execution, principally the latter.

Doct. The end of the last judgment is, that every man, according to what he hath done, may receive reward and punishment.

Without this, the whole process of that day would be but a solemn and useless pageantry, and therefore the end bindeth all upon us. And as we have considered the other circumstances we must consider this also. This receiving the things done in the body relateth either to the doom and sentence, or else to the execution. For the sentence, see Serm. Mat. xxv., vers. 34 and 41. I shall here speak of the execution; it is set forth emphatically, Mat. xxv. 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.' In which scripture,

1. There is a distribution of the persons—these and the righteous, the goats and the sheep, the workers of iniquity and the godly, the righteous and the wicked. This is the most material distinction, and

an everlasting distinction. It is the most material and important distinction. There is a distinction of nations; some lie nearer to the sun, others more remote or farther off; some in a southerly, some in a northerly climate, but they are all alike near to the Sun of righteousness. Jew, or Greek, or barbarian, are all one in Christ, Gal. iii. 28. There is a distinction of endowments; some are learned and some unlearned. Yet the gospel looketh equally upon both, and Christ's disciples owe the equal debt of love to both, Rom. i. 14. There is a distinction of ranks and degrees in the world; some are noble, and others ignoble, but before God *omnis sanguis concolor*—all blood is of a colour; and the true spiritual nobility is to be born of God, John i. 13. The gospel puts the rich and poor on the same level, James i. 9, 10. They differ in worldly estate; but all have the same redeemer; as under the law, the rich and the poor paid the same ransom, Exod. xxx. 15. There is a distinction between bond and free, but the bond are Christ's freemen, 1 Cor. vii. 22; and the free is Christ's servant, Eph. vi. 7. All these are not material to our acceptance with God. There is a distinction between opinions, and petty sects and parties in the church, but this is not the grand distinction, which will hold weight at the day of doom. There were different parties at Corinth, and they were apt to band one against another, but yet they had but one common Christ: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours.' We inclose and impale the common salvation, unchristian and unminister one another, cast one another out of God's favour, but God's approbation doth not go by our vote and suffrage; there lieth an appeal from man's censure, *lingua Petilliani non est ventilabrum Christi*. It is well that every angry brother's tongue is not Christ's fan where-with he will purge his floor. God in his judgment taketh notice of another distinction, whether we be righteous or wicked, holy or unholy: 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his face is against them that do evil,' 1 Peter iii. 12. That is the distinction which doth bear weight before Christ's tribunal. And this is the everlasting distinction. Other distinctions do not outlive time, they cease at the grave's mouth; within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part we have acted in the world, whether we have been high or low, rich or poor; but much will lie upon it, whether we have been godly or ungodly, whether we have sowed to the flesh or to the spirit. This distinction will last for ever, and the one of them will fill heaven and the other hell. The whole world is comprised in one of these two ranks; there is no neutral or middle estate.

2. As there are different persons, so there are different recompenses, and a different doom and sentence which is executed upon either; the conclusion is dreadful to the wicked but comfortable to the godly, for everlasting life shall be the portion of the godly, and everlasting punishment the portion of the ungodly. This one scripture well improved should be enough to make us shun all sin, and embrace and pursue after all good. Wisdom lieth in considering the end of things, not what profit and pleasure it bringeth me now, and flattereth me with now, but what it will bring me in the end: Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death; but being made free from sin, and

become the servants of God, ye have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life.' Alas! sin bringeth little pleasure or satisfaction in the time of enjoying it; and in the remembrance of it, it bringeth shame; and in the conclusion, where it is not repented of, it bringeth death. Whereas, on the other side, the service of Christ will be matter of joy and pleasure at the present; matter of comfort and confidence afterward; and in the end, salvation and eternal life. There is a curiosity in man; he would fain know his own destiny, what shall become of him, or what lieth hid in the womb of futurity concerning his estate; as the king of Babylon stood upon the parting of the ways to make divination. No destiny deserveth to be known so much as this, Shall I be saved, or shall I be damned; live everlasting in heaven or hell? If the question were, Shall I be rich, or shall I be poor, happy or miserable in the present world? shall I have a long life, or shall I have a short? that is not of such great moment. We cannot meet with such troubles and difficulties here, but they will have a speedy end; so will persecutions, and disgraces, and sorrows; but this is a matter of greater moment than so, whether I shall be eternally miserable. It is foolish curiosity to inquire into other things; they are not of such importance that we should know them beforehand; and it may do us more hurt than good to know our worldly estate, the misery of which cannot be prevented by any prudence and foresight of ours. And it is better to trust ourselves with the providence of God than to anticipate future cares; but it concerneh us much to know whether we are in a damnable or a saveable condition, whether we are of the number of those that shall go into everlasting punishment, or of the righteous who shall go into everlasting life; if we be in the way to everlasting punishment, it is good to know it whilst we have time to remedy it. If heirs of salvation, the assurance of our interest is a pre-occupation of everlasting blessedness. This is that about which we should busy our thoughts and spend our time.

3. Observe the notions by which this different estate is expressed—life and punishment.

[1.] The happy condition of the godly is called life, and well deserveth it. This life is but a continued death, it runneth from us as fast as it floweth to us, and it is burdened with a thousand miseries; but that life which is the portion of the faithful, it is a good and happy life, and it is endless, it hath a beginning, but it hath no end. One moment of immortality is worth a full age of all the health and happiness that can be had upon earth. What will you call life? the vegetative life, or the life of a plant? Alas, if that may be called life, it is not a happy life, for the plants have no sense of that kind of life they have. The sensitive life, or the life of the beasts, will you call that life? They are indeed capable of pain and pleasure, but this is beneath the dignity of man; and those that affect this kind of happiness, to enjoy sensual pleasure without remorse, degrade themselves from that dignity of nature wherein God hath placed them, and make themselves but a wiser sort of beasts, as they are able only to purvey for the flesh more than the brutes can. Wherein then will you place life? Surely in reason; man's life is a kind of light given us: John i. 4, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Reason and

understanding was man's perfection. Well then, this is the life which we must inquire after. Now when is this life of light in its full perfection? While the soul dwelleth in flesh, and looketh out by the senses to things near at hand; the proper contentments of the body are the poor, paltry vanities of this deceitful world. Now, this is not the life which we were made for, but when it seeth God, and enjoyeth God in the highest manner that we are capable of. Our true life lieth in the vision of God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and Mat. v. 8, for he is only that universal and infinite object which can satiate the heart of man, and our proper and peculiar blessedness: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' Ps. lxxiii. 25. This is our full and continued happiness. Alas! the present life hath more gall than honey; its enjoyments are low and base, and short and fading, and its troubles and miseries are many: Gen. xlvi. 9, 'Few and evil are the days and years of my pilgrimage.' But in the other world, there is nothing but glory and blessedness. A glorified soul in a glorified body doth for ever behold God, and delight itself in God.

[2.] The other notion is punishment, the word signifieth not only punishment, but torment; so we render it, 1 John. iv. 18, 'Because fear hath torment.' Annihilation were a favour to the wicked; they have a being, but it is a being under punishment and torment. Divines usually distinguish of *pæna damni* and *pæna sensus*; the loss and the pain. Both are included, Mat. xxv. 41, in Christ's sentence, 'Depart, and go into everlasting fire.' God doth not take away the being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being; he is banished out of his sight for evermore, and deprived of his favour, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed on the godly; and that is enough to make him miserable. It is true a wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance, because looking to visible things he hath no sound faith of those things which are invisible; but now he cometh to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and besides hath no natural comforts to divert his mind, no plays, or balls, or pleasures, or meat and drink, and company, which now do draw off his heart from better things, and solace him in the want of them. Secondly, the pain of sense, that is double, 'the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched,' Mark. ix. 44. The worm is the worm of conscience, reflecting upon his evil choice and past folly, which hath brought him to this sad and doleful estate. When he considereth for what base things he sold his birthright, Heb. xii. 15; he parted with felicity and the life to come, this will be a continual torment and vexation to them; and being under despair of ever coming out of this condition, his torment is the more increased. If there were no more than this conscience reflecting upon the sense of his loss, with the cause and consequences of it, surely this will fill him with anguish; and the body, united to such a miserable, self-vexing and self-tormenting soul, can have no rest. Besides this, there is the 'fire that shall never be quenched,' which is the wrath which bringeth on unspeakable torments on the body; for, 'Woe, wrath, tribulation and anguish is the portion of every soul that doth evil,' Rom. ii. 9, 10. What kind of punishments they are we know not, but such as are grievous, and come not only from the reflection of their own consciences,

but the power of God: Rom. ix. 22, 'God will show his wrath, and make his power known.'

4. Eternity is affixed to both everlasting punishment and eternal life.

[1.] The joys of the blessed are everlasting. There shall never be change of and intermission in their happiness, but after millions and millions of imaginary years, they are to continue in this life, as if it were the first moment. Paul telleth you, 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'That we shall for ever be with the Lord.' And what can we desire more. In this life, if we had the confluence of all manner of comforts, yet the fear of losing them is some infringement of our happiness. But there, whatever glory we partake of, we shall never lose it; it will be thy crown for ever, thy kingdom for ever, thy glory for ever, thy God and thy Christ for ever. Oh, why do we no more think of this? This life, that scarce deserveth the name of a life, yet we would fain continue it, though in pain and misery: 'Skin for skin, all that a man hath, would he give for his life.' Oh, then, how welcome should eternal life be, which, compared with this life, is like the ocean to a drop! When we lay both of these lives together, this fading moment and that enduring eternity, how much more valuable doth the one appear than the other? Our sorrows will soon end, but these joys, when they once begin, will never end: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'This light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Cannot we suffer with him for one hour, deny ourselves a little contentment in the world? Shall we begrudge the labours of a few duties, when, as soon as the veil and curtain of the flesh is drawn, we shall enter into eternal life and joy.

[2.] The punishment is everlasting. The wicked are everlastingly deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance. When Absalom could not see his father's face, Kill me, saith he, rather than let it be always thus, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. The wicked are never more to be admitted into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all peace and joy. And therefore how miserable will their condition be! Besides, the pain will be eternal, as well as the loss; not one kind of misery only shall light upon wicked men. The scripture representeth it by everything which is terrible; sometimes by death, which is so much feared; sometimes by fire and brimstone, which are so terrible in burning; sometimes by chains and darkness, and prisons and dungeons; because men in extremity of pain and misery do use to weep and wail, and gnash their teeth, sometimes by that. All these dreadful expressions give us some crevice light into the state of the other world. Now these things shall be without ceasing, for neither heaven nor hell have any period; there is no time set when the fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease.

But how can it stand with the justice of God, for a momentary action to cast men into everlasting torment? I answer—

1. God will govern the world by his own reasons, and not by our fancies; for we are told, he giveth no account of his matters; he hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction, it is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God make good his threatenings, and bring the misery upon the creature, which he hath foretold, where lieth the injustice? What part of the punishment would you have relaxed?

the loss or the pain? The loss is double, of God's favour, and of his natural comforts. Would you have God admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never cared for him? or to return to their natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and abuse them to an occasion of the flesh, and to quiet and beguile his conscience with the enjoyments of the world, that he may the better bear the loss of these, or to lessen the pain, when the sin and impenitency obstinately doth still continue?

2. It is meet for the government of the world, that the penalties should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against fleshly lusts, which, being more pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need to be checked by a severe commination. Man is a very slave to sensitive pleasure; which, being born and bred with him, is not easily renounced; therefore God hath told us beforehand, that if 'we live after the flesh, we shall die.' The pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear; the sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and delight balanced with fear, that by setting eternal pains against momentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation. 'The pleasures of sin, which are for a season,' Heb. xi. 25, bring torments which are everlasting. The fearful end of this delightful course may deter us from it: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' God hath so proportioned the dispensation of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, that it is left to our own choice, whether we will have it here or hereafter; whether we will enjoy pleasure as the fruit of sin, or as the reward of obedience; both we cannot have. And it is agreeable to the wisdom of our law-giver, that things to come should have some advantage in the proposal, above things present, that the joy and pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be greater than the joy and pain of this world, which is a matter of sense. Things at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they be not considerably greater; therefore here the pain is short, and so is the pleasure, but there it is eternal. Well then, it becometh the wisdom of God, that those who would have their pleasure here, should have their pain hereafter, and that eternally. And those that will work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and pass through the difficulties of religion, should have pleasures at his right hand for evermore: James. v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth;' and Luke. xvi. 25, 'Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.' You must not think to pass from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom.

3. No law observeth this, that the *mora pænae*, the continuance of the punishment, should be no longer than the *mora culpeæ*, than the time of acting the offence. Amongst all the punishments which human laws inflict, there is no punishment but is longer. Loss, shame, exile, bondage, imprisonment, may be for life, for a fact done in a day or hour; punishment doth not repair so easily, as offence doth pervert, public right and good. Therefore the punishment may continue longer than the time wherein the crime was committed.

There are many reasons in the cheap commission of sin which justify this appointment, as—

[1.] *A majestate Dei*, against whom the sin is committed, and who

is depreciated, and contemned by the creature's offence. What base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in the enjoyment of him ! at how vile a price is his favour sold !

[2.] *A natura peccati*, which is a preference of a sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. Men refuse an eternal kingdom offered to them, for a little carnal satisfaction, Heb. xi. 25 ; and if they be eternally miserable they have but their own choice.

[3.] *A voluntate peccatoris*, he would continue his sin everlastingily if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would have been, if they had lived eternally upon earth ; they desire always to enjoy the delights and pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than leave them. Well then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising his favour for some temporal pleasure or profit, and this they would do everlastingily, if they could subsist here so long, this doth sufficiently justify this appointment.

5. Both are the result of a foregoing judgment, wherein the cause had been sufficiently tried and cleared, and sentence passed. In all regular judgment, after the trial of the cause, there is sentence, and upon sentence, execution. So it is here, there is a discussion of the cause, and then a sentence of absolution to the godly : Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father ; inherit the kingdom prepared for you ' of condemnation on the wicked : ver. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire.' Then what remaineth but that the sentence should be executed ? This being the final sentence which shall be given upon all men and all their works, the end of this judgment is to do justice, and to fulfil the will and truth of the law-giver. Now the execution is certain, speedy, and unavoidable.

[1.] Certain ; when the matter is once tried, there will be sentence ; and sentence once past, there will be execution. We often break up court before things come to a full hearing, and so delay the sentence ; if we cannot delay the sentence, we seek to delay the execution ; but sentence once past here, it must needs be executed. Partly, because there will be no change of mind in the judge ; he is inflexible and inexorable, because there is no error in his sentence, but it is every way righteous, and the truth of God is now to be manifested. God would not affright us with that he never intended to do ; grant this judgment and execution is uncertain, and all his threatenings will be but a vain scarecrow. In the days of his patience and grace his sentence may be repealed : *Mutat sententiam, sed non decretum* ; as Jer. viii. 7, 8, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and a kingdom, to pluck it up, and pull it down, and to destroy it, if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from the evil, I will repent of the evil, which I thought to do.' Here God revoketh the doom ; conviction now maketh way for conversion, but then for confusion. And partly, because there is no change of state in the persons judged ; they are *in termino*, as the apostle angels. While man is in the way, his case is compassionateable ; God allowed a change of state to man after the fall, which must not last always, 2 Peter iii. 9. He waiteth long for our repentance, but he will not wait ever ; here we may get the sentence reversed, if we repent, but then it is final and

peremptory, excluding all further hopes and possibility of remedy. And partly, because there can be no change of the heart, they may have some relentings, when matters of faith become matter of sense. For if they would not love God inviting by his mercies and offering pardon, then they will not love him condemning and punishing, and shutting them out from all hope. These three infer one another; because no change of heart, no change of state; because no change of state, no change of sentence.

[2.] It is speedy. There was no delay, they were presently transmitted, and put into their everlasting estate; here is *sententia lata, sed dilata*—sentence is past but not executed: Eccles. viii. 11, ‘Because sentence is not speedily executed upon an evil doer.’ But here it is otherwise, they must depart, and be gone speedily out of God’s presence: Esther vii. 8, ‘As soon as the word was gone out of the king’s mouth,’ they had him away to execution.

[3.] It is unavoidable. It is in vain to look about for help, all the world cannot rescue one such soul. In short, there is no avoiding by appeal, because this is the last judgment; nor by rescue, they shall go away, not of their own accord, but compelled; it is said, Mat. xiii. 42, ‘The angels shall gather them, and cast them into a furnace of fire.’ So again cast them, they shall be dragged away. Not by flight, for there is no escaping; nor entreaty, for the judge is inexorable.

6. The sentence is executed upon the wicked first; it beginneth with them, for it is said ‘These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.’ Now this is not merely because the order of the narration did so require it, the wicked being spoken of last; but there is a material truth in it, sentence beginneth with the godly, and execution with the wicked. Sentence with the godly, because they are not only to be judged, but to judge the world together with Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 2. Now they must be first acquitted and absolved themselves before that honour can be put upon them. But execution with the wicked: Mat. xiii. 30, ‘Let both grow together until the harvest. I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, to burn them, gather ye the wheat into my barn.’ First the wicked are cast into hell-fire, Christ and all the godly with him looking on; which worketh more upon the envy and grief of the wicked, that they are thrust out, while the godly remain with Christ, seeing execution done upon them. And the godly have the deeper sense of their own happiness by seeing from what wrath they are delivered; as the Israelites when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore, Exod. xiv. 30, 31, with xv. 1, ‘Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.’ So when the wicked in the sight of the godly are driven into their torments, they have a greater apprehension of their Redeemer’s mercy.

Use 1. To press us to believe these things. Most men’s faith about the eternal recompenses is but pretended; at best too cold, and a speculative opinion rather than a sound belief, as appeareth by the little fruit and effect that it hath upon us; for if we had such a sight of them as we have of other things, we should be other manner of persons than we are, in ‘all holy conversation and godliness.’ We see how cautious man is in tasting meat in which he doth suspect harm, that it will breed in him the pain and torments of the stone and gout or

colic ; I say, though it be but probable the things will do us any hurt. We know certainly that the wages of sin is death, yet we will be tasting forbidden fruit. If a man did but suspect a house were falling, he would not stay in it an hour ; we know for certain that continuance in a carnal state will be our eternal ruin ; yet who doth flee from wrath to come ? If we have but a little hope of gain we will take pains to obtain it. We know that ‘our labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ Why do we not abound in his work ? 1 Cor. xv. 58. Surely we would do more to prevent this misery, to obtain this happiness, when we may do it upon such easy terms, and have so fair an opportunity in our hands ; if we were not so strangely stupefied, we would not go to hell to save ourselves a labour. There are two things which are very wondrous ; that any man should reject the christian faith, or that having embraced it, should live sinfully and carelessly.

Use 2. Seriously consider of these things. The scripture everywhere calleth for consideration.

Think of this double motive, that every man must be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment. These things are propounded aforehand for our benefit and instruction ; we are guarded on both sides ; we have the bridle of fear and the spur of hope. If God had only terrified us from sin, by mentioning inexpressible pains and horrors, we might be frightened and stand at a distance from it ; but when we have such encouragements to good, and God propoundeth such unspeakable joys, this should quicken our diligence. If he had only promised heaven, and threatened no hell, wicked men would count it no great matter to lose heaven, provided that they might be annihilated ; but when there is both, and both for ever, shall we be cold and dead ? We are undone for ever if wicked, blessed for ever if godly ; let us hold the edge of this truth to our hearts ; what should we not do that we may be eternally blessed, and avoid everlasting misery ? It is no matter what we suffer in time, and endure in time.

Use 3. Improve it, first, to seek a reconciliation with God in the way of faith and repentance. A man that is under the sentence of death, and in danger to be executed every moment, would not be quiet till he get a pardon. All men by nature are children of wrath, as a son of death is one condemned to die ; so it is an Hebraism. Now ‘run for refuge, to take hold of the hope that is set before you,’ Heb. vi. 18 ; ‘Make peace upon earth,’ Luke ii. 14 ; ‘Agree with thine adversary quickly, while he is in the way,’ Luke xii. 58, 59 ; ‘Now God calleth to repentance,’ Acts xvii. 30, 31 ; ‘Oh, labour to be found of him in peace,’ 2 Peter iii. 14. How can a man be at rest till his great work be over ?

Improve it to holiness and watchfulness, and to bridle licentiousness and boldness in sinning : Eccl. xi. 9, ‘Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth ; walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,’ as cold water cast into a boiling pot stops its fury ; 1 Peter i. 17, ‘And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man, according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.’ Say as the town-clerk of Ephesus : Acts ix. 40, ‘We are in danger to

be called in question for this day's uproar.' I must give an account for idle words, careless praying, and unprofitable mis-spending of time.

3. Improve it to patience under ignominy and reproaches. Thy innocence will appear on thy trial; if in an abject condition, the upright shall have dominion in the morning; afflictions and persecutions will then end, and thou shalt have thy reward: 1 Thes. i. 6, 7, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost, so that ye were examples of all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia;' and, 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Wherefore, my beloved, be stedfast and unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.'

SERMON XVIII.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences—2 COR. v. 11.

THE apostle is giving an account of his sincerity, zeal, and faithfulness in his ministry. Three things moved him to it; hope, fear and love. Here he asserteth the influence of the second principle.

In the words take notice of two things.

1. The motive and reason of his fidelity in his ministry, *knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*

2. The witnesses to whom he appealeth for the proof of his fidelity and diligence,—(1.) God the searcher of hearts; (2.) The consciences of his auditors, who had felt the benefit and force of the word.

[1.] To God, as the supreme witness, approver, and judge; *but we are made manifest unto God*, he seeth our principles and aims, and with what hearts we go about our work.

[2.] To the Corinthians as secondary witnesses; *and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.* He was confident that he had a witness of his sincerity and uprightness in their consciences. The greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to have an approbation in their consciences. Mark the order; our first desire should be to approve ourselves to God, who is our judge, and then to men; and in doing that, to approve ourselves to their consciences, which is the faculty which is most apt to take God's part, rather than to their humours, that we may gain their respect and applause; next to God the testimony of conscience, next to our own conscience the consciences of others.

1. I begin with the motive and reason of his fidelity: knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men, *τὸν φόβον τοῦ Κυρίου*—the Vulgar, *timorem Domini*, knowing the fear of the Lord; Erasmus, Beza and our translation, *terrorem Domini*; Grotius, according to the former reading, knowing the fear of the Lord, *i.e.*, the true way of religion,

we persuade men to embrace it. Rather, the apostle understandeth the terror of this judgment; being certain that these things are so, and that such a terrible judgment of Christ will come, we persuade men to become christians, or to live as such as shall speed well then, when others shall be destroyed. He saith plurally, *πειθομεν*, we persuade, as comprising his colleagues, suppose Timotheus and Sylvanus; he and they persuaded men to embrace the faith, and to live as those who are to be judged. For it is to be looked upon,

[1.] As an argument and motive to persuade himself, and his colleagues, to sincerity in their ministry, who were to give an account of their dispensation.

[2.] As an argument and motive to the people for their obedience to the faith.

Doct. That the certain knowledge of the terrible judgment of God should move us to persuade, and you that hear to be persuaded, to a careful and serious preparation for it. In managing which point,

1. I shall consider the object. Here is terror or matter of fear offered in the judgment mentioned.

2. The subject, or persons fearing—Paul and his colleagues, together with all the parties who are to be judged.

3. The means. How this fear cometh to be raised in us, or to work on us: ‘Knowing.’

4. The effect. Here is persuasion grounded thereon; ‘Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.’

First, That there is terror, and matter of fear offered in the day of judgment, upon several accounts.

1. As it is an impartial judgment, that shall pass upon all, heathens, christians, apostles, ministers, private persons. This ground is urged, 1 Pet. i. 17, ‘If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.’ Those who take the Lord to be their father, and themselves for his children, must consider him also as an exact and an impartial judge of all their actions; and therefore with the more care and solicitude carry on the work of holiness. What is respecting or accepting persons in the judgment? It is to esteem one person rather than another for outward advantages, not regarding the merits of the cause which cometh to discussion and trial, as in man’s courts, when men are spared for their greatness, dignity, or worldly pre-eminence. But what person may God be supposed to respect, or accept in judgment? Surely none can be so irrational as to think the great or rich can have any pretension to his favour, or merciful dealing, rather than others. No; noble or ignoble, poor or rich, prince or beggar, they all stand upon the same level before God. Well then, the persons who may be supposed to presume upon the indulgence of that day, are such who make a fair profession, enjoy many outward privileges; as suppose the Jew above the Gentile, the christian above the Jew, the officer, or one employed in the church, above the common christian. The privilege of the Jew was his circumcision, the knowledge of the law and outward obedience thereunto, or submission to the rituals of Moses; because they were exact in these things, they hoped to be accepted with God, and to be more favourably dealt with than others.

The privilege of the christian is baptism, the knowledge of Christ, being of his party, and visibly owning his interest in the world ; they have eaten and drunk in his presence, he hath taught in their streets, and they have frequented the assembly where he is ordinarily present, and more powerfully present, Luke xiii. 26. It is possible they have put themselves in a stricter garb of religion, forborne disgraceful sins, been much in external ways of duty, given God all the cheap and plausible obedience which the flesh can spare. But if all this be without solid godliness, or that sound constitution of heart or course of life which the principles of our profession would breed, and call for, these privileges will be no advantage to him. Well then, let the officer come, the apostle, prophet, pastor or teacher, by what names or titles soever they be distinguished, who have borne rule in the church, been much in exercising their gifts for his glory, have taught others the way of salvation ; this is their privilege : Mat. vii. 22, ‘Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works ? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.’ Well now, if no man’s person shall be accepted, if not for his profession, if not for his office, if not for his external ministrations, surely we ought to be strict and diligent, and seriously godly, as well as others. And if we shall all appear before this holy, just, and impartial judge, we should all pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

2. It is a strict and a just judgment : Acts xvii. 30, 31, ‘He commandeth now all men everywhere to repent : because he hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.’ Now God winketh at every man’s faults, and doth not take vengeance on them, judgeth the world in patience ; but then all men must give an account, those who have refused the remedy offered to lapsed mankind, shall have judgment without mercy. And how terrible will that judgment be, when the least sin rendereth us obnoxious to the severity of his revenging justice ! But those who have heard the gospel, and accepted the Redeemer’s mercy, shall also be judged according to their works, in the manner formerly explained. There is a remunerative justice observed to them ; we must give an account of all our actions, thoughts, speeches, affections, and intentions, that it may be seen whether they will amount to sincerity, or a sound belief of the truths of the gospel, and therefore we should be the more careful to walk uprightly before him : Mat. xii. 36, 37, ‘But I say unto you, that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the judgment ; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.’ Words must be accounted for, especially false, blasphemous words, and such as flow out of the evil treasure of the heart ; and sadly accounted for. For in conferring rewards and punishments, God taketh notice of words, as well as actions, they make up a part of the evidence ; certainly in this just judgment we shall find that it is a serious business to be a christian. But those who have owned the Redeemer, must esteem him in their hearts above all worldly things, and value his grace above the allurements of sense, and count all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of their Lord, Phil. iii. 7-9 ; and glorify him in their lives, 1 Thes. i. 11, 12 ; and

pass through the pikes : ‘ To him that overcometh,’ Rev. ii. 26 ; and resist the devil, and subdue the flesh, and vanquish the world. There must be doing, and there must be suffering ; there must be giving, and forgiving, giving out of our estates, and forgiving wrongs and injuries ; visiting the sick, and clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry ; there must be believing, and loving, mortifying sin and perfecting holiness. And this is the trial of those who come under the gospel-covenant ; which might be easily proved, if the thing were not evident of itself. Now judge you whether all this should not beget the fear of reverence, or caution at least ; which fear of God should always reign in the hearts of the faithful.

God’s final sentence is to be passed upon us, upon which our eternal estate dependeth. Therefore the great weight and consequence of that day maketh it matter of terror to us. We are to be happy for ever, or undone for ever ; our estate will be then irrevocable. Where a man cannot err twice, there he cannot use too much solicitude. According to our last account, so shall the condition of every man be for ever. What is a matter of greater moment than to be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment ? Matters of profit or disprofit, credit or discredit, temporal life and death, are nothing to it. If a man lose in one bargain, he may recover himself in another ; credit may be wounded by one action, and healed in another, though the scar remain, the wound may be cured. If a man die, there is hope of life in another world ; but if sentenced to eternal death, there is no reversing of it. Therefore, now, we, knowing the terror of the Lord, sue out our own pardon, and persuade others to sue out their pardon, in the name of Christ, to make all sure for the present.

4. The execution, in case of failing in our duty, is terrible beyond expression. Because this is the main circumstance, and is at the bottom of all, I shall a little dilate upon it, not to affright you with needless perplexities, but in compassion to your souls, God knoweth. I shall take the rise thus : the object of all fear is some evil approaching ; now the greater the evil is, the nearer it approacheth, the more certain and inevitable it is, and the more it concerneth ourselves, the more cause of fear there is ; all these concur in the business in hand.

[1.] The execution bringeth on the greatest evil ; the evil of punishment, and the greatest punishment, the wrath of God, the wrath of the eternal judge, who can and will cast body and soul into eternal fire. This was due to all by the first covenant, and will be the portion of impenitent sinners by the second : Heb. x. 31, ‘ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’ Mark, first, obstinate and impenitent sinners do immediately fall into the hands of God ; a metaphor taken from one that is fallen into the hands of an enemy who lieth in wait for him, to take full revenge upon him ; if he catch him, he is sure to pay for it. Now we are let alone, but then we fall into his hands, and he will be righted for all the wrongs which we have done him. Now, when God shall have an immediate hand in the punishment of the wicked, it will make it terrible indeed. When God punisheth by the creature, he can put a great deal of strength into the creature, to overwhelm us, by hail, locusts, flies, frogs ; if they

come of God's errand they are terrible; but a bucket cannot contain an ocean; as a giant striking with a straw in his hand, he cannot put forth all his strength; when God punisheth by creatures, it is like a giant's striking with a straw in his hand. But now by himself, we fall into his own hands. Again observe, it is the living God. God liveth himself, and continueth the life of the creature. God liveth for ever to reward his friends, and punish his adversaries. A mortal man cannot extend punishment beyond death; when they have killed the body they can do no more, Mat. x. 28. We are mortal, and they that persecute and hate us are mortal. But since he liveth to all eternity, he can punish to all eternity. So long as God is God, so long will hell be hell. It is tedious to think of a short fit of pain. In a feverish distemper we count not only hours but minutes; when in such a distemper we cannot sleep in the night, how tedious and grievous is it to us! But what will it be to fall into the hands of the living God? Thirdly, The apostle saith, *eis χεῖρας Θεοῦ*. The wrath of God is no vain scare-crow, and if anything be matter of terror, the terror of the Lord is so. But, alas, who consider it, or mind this? Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knoweth the power of his anger? According to his fear, so is his wrath.' Who layeth it to heart, so as to be sensible of his own danger, while he is permitted to live? We divert our thoughts by vain pleasures, as Saul cured the evil spirit by music. The delights of the flesh benumb the conscience, and exclude all thoughts of eternity. Again it is called wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7; and, 1 Thes. i. 10. It is so called to denote the certainty, and the terribleness of it. The certainty of it; it will most certainly come upon the wicked; the day is not foretold, but it is a-coming; wrath hovereth over our heads, it is every day nearer, as the salvation of the elect is, Rom. xiii. 4. *A pari*, whether we sleep or wake, we are all a step nearer, a day nearer, a night nearer, to eternity. They that are in a ship are swiftly carried on to their port by the wind, though they know it not; security sheweth it is coming on apace: 'Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter ii. 3. They sleep, but their damnation sleepeth not. But, secondly, it is called wrath to come in regard of the terribleness of it. There is a present wrath that men suffer, and there is a wrath to come; this is such a wrath, as never was before; present wrath may be slighted, but wrath to come will stick close: Jer. v. 3, 'I have stricken them, but they have not grieved.' There is a senseless stupidness under judgments now, but then men cannot have hard or insensible hearts if they would. Present wrath may be reversed, but men are then in their final estate, and God will deal with them upon terms of grace no more. Present wrath seizeth not upon the whole man, the body suffereth that the soul may be saved, but there body and soul are cast into hell. Present wrath is executed by the creatures, but in the other world God is all in all. Present wrath is mixed with comforts, but there it is an evil, and only an evil, Ezek. vii. 5. There is no wicked man in the day of God's patience but hath somewhat left him, but there they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, Rev. xiv. 10. It is not allayed and tempered with any mercies. There is a difference in duration; present wrath endeth

with death. The drowning of the world, the burning of Sodom, was a sad thing, if a man had been by, and seen the poor miserable creatures running from valleys to hills, from hills to mountains, from the mountains to the tops of trees, and still the floods increasing upon them; or had heard the screechings, when God rained hell out of heaven, and seen the scalded Sodomites wallowing up and down in a deluge of fire and brimstone; but all ended with death. But this fire is never quenched, and the worm never dieth. Now should man know this, and not persuade, or be persuaded, and take warning to flee from wrath to come? Surely the thoughts of falling into the hands of God should shake the stoutest heart, and awaken the dullest sinner, rouse up the most careless, to use all possible means to prevent it.

[2.] The nearer it approacheth, it should the more affect us. It is but a short time to the general assizes; we live in that age of the world upon which the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. x. 11; 'Little children, it is the last hour,' 1 John ii. 18. And let us stir up one another, so much the rather as ye see the day approacheth, Heb. x. 25. It cannot be long to the end of time, if we compare the remainder with what is past, or the whole with eternity; but for our particular doom and judgment, every man must die, and be brought to his last account. Now the day of death approacheth apace; the more of our life is past, the less is yet to come; every week, day, hour, minute, we approach nearer to death, and death to us. But, alas! we little think of these things; every soul of us within less than an hundred years, it may be but ten, or five, or one, shall be in heaven or hell. The judge is at the door, James v. 9. We shall quickly be in another world. Now should we hold our peace, and let men go on sleepily to their own destruction, or to suffer men to waste away more of their precious time, before they get ready? It is said, Amos vi. 3, 'They put far away the evil day;' and therefore it did not work upon them—that is, they put off the thoughts of it; for as to the day itself, they can neither put it on, nor off.

[3.] The more certain and unavoidable any evil is, the greater matter of terror. Now it is as certain as if it were begun, and there is no way to escape either trial, sentence, or execution. Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 14, 'The wrath of a king is as the messengers of death;' because they have long hands, and power to reach us. The wrinkles of their angry brow are as graves and furrows; yet some have escaped the wrath of kings and worldly potentates, as Elijah escaped the vengeance of Jezebel: 1 Kings xix. 2, 3, 'The gods do so to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them to-morrow by this time. And when he heard that, he rose and fled to Beersheba for his life.' But there is no escaping God's wrath, Rev. vi. 16; no avoiding his sight, or escaping the stroke of his justice, Ps. cxxxix. 7.

[4.] If it particularly concern every one of us. A clap of thunder in our own zenith doth more affright us, than when it is at a distance. This did once belong to all, and it doth still belong to the impenitent; and therefore we should take the more care, that we be not of that number; and while we are in the state of trial, we cannot be over confident. I am sure it is a sinful confidence, that is joined with the neglect of the means to shun it. The dreadful consequence of that day to the wicked,

it is in itself a matter of terror to all ; and to slight this terror is to turn the grace of God into wantonness ; and it cometh either from unbelief, or from a dull, stupid, senseless spirit. And if it produceth not caution and watchfulness, and serious and diligent preparation, it is not a fruit of the assurance of the love of God, but of the security of the flesh. I confess it is a case of conscience, how to make the day of judgment matter of joy and confidence, and matter of terror and caution ; sometimes we are bidden to reflect upon it with joy and confidence, so as we may love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8 ; to lift up our heads, because our redemption draweth nigh, Luke xvii. 28 ; to rejoice because we shall be partakers of the blessedness promised, 1 Peter iv. 14 ; at other times matter of fear and terror. These are not contrary ; the one is to prevent slight thoughts, which are very familiar with us, the other future perplexities and dejection of spirit ; the strictness of our account, the dreadful consequence to those that shall be found faulty, should not discourage us in the way of duty ; eternal wrath should not be feared farther than to stir us up to renew our flight to Christ, and to quicken us in his service, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.

Secondly, The persons fearing, Paul and his colleagues, together with all the parties who are to be judged. That the unspeakable terror of the Lord is a rational, just and equitable ground of fear, we have seen already ; but the doubt is how this could be so to Paul and his colleagues, especially if we consider it mainly, as we ought, with respect to the execution of punishment, or the wrath of God, that shall abide on the impenitent. I answer,

1. To be only moved with terror is slavish. The wicked may out of fear of hell be frightened into a little religiousness, but Paul was moved by other principles, hope and love as well as fear ; see the 14th ver., ‘The love of Christ constraineth us.’ But this among the rest is allowable ; it is one of the Spirit’s motives to quicken us to fly to Christ, and to take sanctuary at his grace, Heb. vi. 18 ; to engage us to thankfulness for our deliverance, 1 Thes. i. 10 : yea, to stir us up to more holy diligence and solicitude in pleasing God, Heb. xiii. 28, 29. The eternal wrath of God, among other things, doth rouse us up to serve him with godly fear.

2. Though Paul and his colleagues had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and were assured of his favour, and their everlasting salvation, yet knowing the terror of the Lord, they had a deeper reverence of his majesty, and so afraid to displease him, or to be unfaithful in their charge and trust, and could not endure that any others should do so. Reverence of God, as one able to destroy us and cast body and soul into hell-fire, is always necessary. The fear of reverence remaineth in heaven, in the glorified saints and angels, and Christ presseth us to this fear, Luke xii. 3, 4.

3. We must distinguish between a perplexing, distrustful fear, and an awful, preventive, eschewing fear. A distracting, tormenting fear of hell, or the wrath of God, would weaken our delight in God, and therefore the love of God casts out this fear, 1 John. iv. 18. But now the awful fear, fleeing from wrath to come, this doth not destroy peace of conscience, or joy in the Holy Ghost, but guard it rather. This

only quickeneth us to use those means by which we may avoid so great an evil. Instances we have in scripture. Job, that was sure that his Redeemer lived, Job xix., yet destruction from the Lord was a terror to him, chap. xxxi.; that is, he thought himself obliged to use all those means by which he might shun so great an evil. So Paul; ‘We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;’—yet, ‘knowing the terror of the Lord.’

4. There are great reasons why this terror should have an influence upon us, while we dwell in flesh.

(1.) Because it was once our due, Eph. iii. 2. And though we are delivered from it by God’s grace, yet still it is a fearful state, which we cannot sufficiently shun and avoid. (2.) We still deserve it, after grace hath made a change in our condition. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1, yet many things are condemnable. We now and then do those things for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; we deserve that God should say to us, Depart, ye cursed. (3.) It is certainly a great and extreme difficulty to get free from so great an evil, 1 Peter iv. 18. We cannot get to the harbour but by encountering many a terrible storm; and God is fain to discipline us, that we may not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. I know I shall be saved, but it is a difficult thing to save me.

Thirdly, The means; how this fear cometh to be raised in us, ‘knowing.’ This implieth three things: (1.) A clear and explicit apprehension; (2.) A firm assent; (3.) Serious consideration.

1. A distinct knowledge of this article of Christ’s coming to judgment: 1 Thes. v. 2, ‘You yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night.’ It is good not only to know things, but to know them perfectly; for though a man may be saved by an implicit faith, as he knoweth things in their common principle, yet explicit faith and plenitude of knowledge, or seeing round about the compass of any truth, conduceth much to the practical improvement of it; instance in the creation of the world. To know the general truth may make me safe, but a distinct explication thereof maketh us more admire the wisdom, goodness, and power of God. So for providence; it engageth my dependence to know there is a providence, but it helpeth my dependence to know how it is managed for the good of God’s children: ‘They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee,’ Ps. ix. 10. So the doctrine of justification by Christ. The thing is plain in all points.

2. Firm assent: John xvii. 8, ‘They have known surely,’ ἀληθῶς, indeed or in truth; and Acts ii. 36, ἀσφαλῶς, assuredly, safely, without danger of error. The certainty of faith mightily enlivens our apprehensions of any truth, and makes them more forcible and operative. But usually there is a defect in our assent; hated truths are usually suspected; ministers speak of it coldly, and in jest, as if not persuaded of what they say; and we hearers learn it by rote. Yet this I must say, God hath not only warned the world of wrath in the Old Testament and the New; but also natural light doth so far evidence this truth, that in their serious and sober moods, men cannot get rid

of the apprehensions of immortality and punishment after death. Reason will tell us that God perfectly hateth sin, will terribly punish it; we cannot easily lay aside these fears, nor stifle them in our bosoms, nor sport them away, nor jest them away; when we are alone, or when we are serious, or when we come to die, they will revive and haunt us. But oh, that we were oftener alone, and would resuscitate and blow up these sentiments which lie hid in the heart, and revive our faith about them!

3. It implieth serious consideration; knowing, that is, considering, acting our thoughts upon it; for next to sound belief, to make truths active, there is required serious consideration. Thoughts of hell may keep many out of hell. It is a moral means, which God may bless: it will be no loss to christians to think of their danger before they incur it. They that cannot endure to think of it, or hear of it, discover their guilt, and the security of their own hearts: presumption is a coward, and a run-away, but faith meeteth its enemy in open field: Ps. xxiii. 4, ‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.’ It supposeth the worst: suppose God should reject me; consider with thyself beforehand, as the unjust steward, Luke xvi., what to do when turned out of doors; how shall I make my defence ‘when God shall rise up, what shall I answer him?’ Job xxxi. 14; what shall I then do?

Fourthly. Here is persuasion as to the effect¹ and fruit of all; which implieth three things.

1. The thing to which they were persuaded. That is not mentioned, but the matter in hand sheweth it to be such things as would bear weight in the judgment, and exempt them from wrath to come; such as faith, repentance, and new obedience. Faith in the Redeemer, 2 Thes. i. 10, Heb. vi. 18; repentance, Mat. iii. 19, and Acts iii. 19; new obedience, Heb. v. 9, 2 Thes. i. 8; or a serious coming to Christ, and hearty subjection to him, is the only way to escape that wrath. To these we exhort and persuade you again and again; without these you are obnoxious to the severity of his revenging justice.

2. Earnest zeal and endeavours on the part of Paul and his colleagues, and all that are like-minded with them; they must not only teach and instruct, but persuade: Col. i. 28, ‘Warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’ He addeth, ver. 29, ‘Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working.’ The understanding is dark and blind in the things of God, and needeth teaching. The will and affections are perverse and backward, and they need warning. And therefore we must warn, and teach; warn, and that not in a cold or flaunting manner, as if we were in jest, and did not believe the things we speak of, but with such vigour, and labour, and striving, as becometh those who would present them to Christ, as the travail of our souls, at the last day, and as those who are sensible of the terror of the Lord ourselves.

3. It implieth a being persuaded on the people’s part. For all that mind their own welfare will take this warning, and since we must shortly appear before the bar of the dreadful God to give an account

¹ Qu. ‘as the effect’?—ED.

what use we have made of these persuasions. When God giveth warning, and God giveth time, our condemnation is the more aggravated: Rev. ii. 21, 'I gave her space to repent, and she repented not.' Warning and persuasion, as Reuben; did not I warn you? 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We beseech you receive not this grace in vain.' God keepeth an account of these warnings, Luke xiii. 7. And the importunity of these pressing convictions which we have had; every request and exhortation made for God will be as a fiery dart in your souls. How fresh will every sermon come into your minds! the melting words of exhortation which you were wont to hear, will be as so many hot burning coals in your hearts, to torment you. It will be easier for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than for you, Mat. x. 15.

Use is, to teach us all to apply this truth. What Paul had spoken in general concerning the last judgment, he applieth to himself. It is not enough to have a general knowledge of truth, but we must improve and apply them to our own use. Men of all ranks must do so.

1. It presseth preachers to persuade men. Oh, how diligently should we study, how earnestly should we persuade, with what love and tender compassion should we beseech men, to escape this wrath to come! How unweariedly should we bear all opposition, and mocks, and scorns, and unthankful returns! How plainly should we rip up men's sores, and open their very hearts to them! How carefully should we watch over every particular soul! How importunate should we be with all sinners, for their conversion, considering that shortly they must be judged! 'Cry aloud, spare not,' Isa. lviii. 1. It is a notable help against a sleepy ministry to consider that those souls to whom we speak, must within a while receive their everlasting doom. When you find a deadness, rouse up yourselves by these thoughts, this will put a life into your exhortations; a sense of what we speak, zeal for the glory of God, and compassion over souls, will not suffer us to do the work of the Lord negligently.

2. To all christians.

[1.] Persuade yourselves, commune with your own souls, Do I know the terror of the Lord? What have I done to escape it? If you would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour. Hide yourselves before the storm cometh: 'If his anger be but kindled a little, blessed are all those that put their trust in him,' Ps. ii. 12. Seek conditions of peace, while a great way off, Luke xiv. A powerful enemy marcheth against us, especially when you begin to grow negligent, dead-hearted, and apt to content yourselves with a sleepy profession. Paul counted this terror, or matter of fear, to be an help to him; and should not we, who are so much beneath him in holiness? Will you, that must shortly be in another world, will you be careless, and please the flesh, and give up the boat to the stream?

[2.] Do you persuade your family, servants, friends, and neighbours, with your children about it; tell them what a dreadful thing it is; they have a conscience, apt to fear. Dives, in the parable, is represented as desirous of his brethren's welfare, lest they should come into that place of torment: Luke xvi. 27, 28, 'Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for

I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell is represented to be? If we have a friend or a child falling into the fire, we save him by violence, though we break an arm or a leg. Your children by nature are children of wrath; pluck them as brands out of the burning.

SERMON XIX.

But we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again to you, but give you an occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them who glory in appearance, and not in heart.—2 Cor. v. 11, 12.

THE apostle having proved his sincerity and fidelity in his ministry, now asserts it with confidence;—(1.) By an appeal;—(2.) An apology.

1. An appeal to God, as the supreme judge; and to the Corinthians, as inferior witnesses. And he appealeth to the most impartial and discerning faculty in them, their consciences, who are most apt to give infallible judgment, and to take God's part, and own what is of God.

2. By an apology, or answer to an objection, which might be framed against him, by his adversaries, ver. 12; where, first, the objections were intimated—*We commend not ourselves again to you.* Secondly, His vindication, from the end, the reason why he spake so much of his fidelity and integrity—*But give you occasion to glory in our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them.* Thirdly, A description of the false apostles at Corinth, or those vain-glorious teachers who went about to lessen the apostle's authority: *They glory in appearance, and not in heart.* Let me explain these passages.

[1.] The intimation of the objection; 'For we commend not ourselves again to you.' The adversaries were wont to say upon all occasions, he runneth out into his own praises; which doth not become a modest and a sober man, for boasting is the froth of pride; and how can Paul be excused from pride? This was the objection against Paul, that he did commend himself too much.

[2.] Paul's answer and vindication was from his end. It was not to set forth his own praise, but to arm them with an argument and an answer against the false teachers, whereby they might defend his ministry, and the doctrine they had heard from him; it was not pride and ostentation in Paul, but a necessary defence of the credit of his ministry, their faith and obedience to the gospel depending thereupon.

[3.] The false apostles are described by their hypocrisy and ambition: 'They glory in appearance, and not in heart.' For the opening of this clause, observe, First, That there were false apostles at Corinth, who sought to depreciate Paul, and to lessen the authority of his

doctrine: 2 Cor. xi. 13-15, 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.' Secondly, These false apostles were great boasters, and apt to glory; whenever they are spoken of, we hear of this glorying; 'that wherein they glory, we may be even as they.' Thirdly, Their glorying (as that of all hypocrites) was in some external thing. Called a glorying *ἐν σαρκὶ*, 2 Cor. xi. 18, 'Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also;' and here *ἐν προσώπῳ, οὐκ ἐν καρδίᾳ*. But what fleshly and external thing they gloried in, is not expressly mentioned. Some leave it in the general, that they boasted before men, otherwise than their conscience, and the truth of the thing did permit: *Omne id quod inter homines humana sapientes, maximi fieri solet*, Grot. Others instance in particular, birth, wealth, abilities of speech, frothy eloquence, 1 Cor. ii; in a coloured show of man's wisdom and eloquence, and not in true godliness. Some think in the multitude of their followers, or in the applause of their hearers; some a show of zeal, holiness and fidelity, when they were destitute of the truth of godliness, and that sincerity which is truly a comfort; some in their taking no maintenance, to gain credit and advantage; that appeareth by 2 Cor. xi. 9. Of all the churches planted by the apostles, Corinth was the richest, and Macedonia the poorest, yet Paul's preaching at Corinth was maintained from Macedonia, 2 Cor. xi. 9. Wherefore? as he himself puts the question, 'That I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion, that wherein they glory, we may be found even as they,' 2 Cor. xi. 12. But what if it be such things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion; as their acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him, while yet alive, which is supposed to be intended in that expression? 1 Cor. i. 12, 'I am of Christ;' others received the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. This boasting these Corinthian doctors used, to keep up their own fame among the people, and to weaken the credit and esteem of Paul's apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was upon earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer to those that gloried, *ἐν προσώπῳ καὶ οὐ καρδίᾳ*, in external privileges, when their consciences could give little testimony of their sincerity,—Paul had more valuable things to boast of, namely, that he was much in spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions, for the honour of the gospel. To all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, and the love of Christ; these were more valuable considerations, whereupon to esteem any one, than bare external privileges could possibly be; nay, in their outward privileges, he could vie with them, for though he was none of Christ's followers, whilst he was here upon earth, yet herein he was equal to them, if not exceeded them, by having seen Christ, and being spoken to by him out of heaven; therefore he saith, 1 Cor. ix. 1, 'Am not I

an apostle? Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?' But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for his faithful discharge of his work, on the grounds fore-mentioned, for he would not glory, *ἐν προσώπῳ* as others did, but *ἐν καρδίᾳ*. Mortified christians, that have given up themselves to the Lord's use, should more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real worth, more than the advantage of external privileges. I am confirmed in this exposition by what is said, ver. 6, 'Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more;' that is, we should not esteem and judge of persons by their conversing with him in the flesh, but by their loyalty and obedience to him. If they be zealous for his kingdom, and can upon the hopes which he hath offered, run all hazards and encounters of temptations, and upon the confidence of his coming to judgment be faithful to him, and out of love to his person, and gratitude for the work of redemption, deny themselves, and live to his glory, they have cause to glory in heart; whereas others, who boast only of personal acquaintance with him, but are not sound in doctrine and the practice of religion, do only glory in a mere appearance, or outward show before men, but can have no true, solid confidence in their hearts. Well then, here lay the case between Paul and his opposites; they gloried in some external thing, which could give no solid peace to the conscience; but Paul could glory in his perseverance, diligence, patience, and self-denial for the gospel; the sense of which made his heart rejoice. And by the way, the same glorying may be taken up by all the faithful, painful preachers of the gospel, against their opposites, who are the popish clergy; who glory in their pomp and their great revenues, and that they are the successors of the apostles, and can pretend an external title to this inheritance, and sit in their chair, as Pope Alexander VI., *Hæc est bona persuasio, quia per hanc nos regnamus.* Now you are to judge, who are they that glory in heart or in appearance. They that glory in their riches, or outward possession? or they that glory in their labours, sufferings, and converting of souls to God?

Doct. That then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity, when he hath the approbation of God, and of his own conscience, and hath also a testimony in the consciences of others.

First, All these had Paul.

1. The approbation of God. For he saith, 'We are made manifest unto God.' God knew both his actions and his aims, for the Lord considereth both, Prov. xvi. 2. Now the Lord knew his labour, his patience, his travelling up and down to promote the kingdom of his Son, as also that he did this out of hope, fear and love. Paul's main care was to approve himself to God, and to be accepted with God.

2. He had the testimony of a good conscience. He telleth them so now, and told them so before: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, but more abundantly to you-ward.' Not by violent or fraudulent means did he seek to promote the gospel, not his self-

opinions, not self-ends; they had more experience than others, for whereas he was maintained by the poorer towns, yet with them he laboured with his hands, and still preached the gospel. As usually, it falleth out often that handicraft people are more liberal for the support of the ministry, than the gentry or nobles upon the account of the gospel; nay, though he could speak of seeing Christ, by extraordinary dispensation, yet he would glory rather in the real and general evidences of grace than in any external privilege and advantage whatsoever. If Paul had never seen Christ, yet he had wherein to glory.

3. And he had a testimony in their consciences, as well as his own: 'I trust also we are made manifest in your consciences.' He was confident that he had a witness in their bosoms of his sincere and upright dealing. The greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to have an approbation in their consciences, for conscience is the faculty which is most apt to take God's part. We may easily gain their respect and applause by complying with their humours, but that is not lasting; that will not do God's work and the gospel's. Our greatest advantage, if we be faithful servants to God, will be to have a witness in their consciences. Thus did Paul; he wanted not opposers at Corinth; some questioned his apostleship, some slighted his abilities, some saw no such evidence and excellency in his doctrine; what should the poor man do? He courted not their affections by arts of insinuation, but approved himself to their consciences.

But how did Paul commend himself to the Corinthians? By three means.

[1.] By the evidence of his doctrine, which he managed with such power and authority, that it was manifestly seen by all who had not a mind to lose their souls, and were not prejudiced by their worldly interest, that it was not calculated for the lusts and interests of men, but their salvation: 1. Cor. iv. 2, 'By the manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Paul preached such necessary truths, as, if men were not strangely perverted, they might see he aimed at their spiritual and eternal benefit.

[2.] By the success of his doctrine: 2 Cor. iii. 1-3, 'Do we begin again to commend ourselves, or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.' The conversions which he had wrought among them, gave a sufficient testimony to their consciences, that he was not a vagrant self-seeker; he had been the instrument of transcribing the doctrine of Christ upon their hearts. Paul prevailed with many at Corinth, and had converted many. God himself assured him of this success: Acts. xviii. 9, 10, 'Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I have much people in this city.' It was an opulent, but a wanton town, but God would be with him, and had much people; therefore Paul ventured, and prevailed.

[3.] By the purity, holiness and self-denial which were seen in his

conversation : 2 Cor. vi. 4-6, ‘But in all things approving ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings: By pureness, by knowledge, by long-sufferings, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left,’ &c. These were the evidences which he had in their consciences—the faithful discharge of his office in all sort of pressures, wants, and exigencies; as also by the constant study of the mind of God, and purity of life, and abundance of Spirit, and sincere charity and love to souls. By these things should a people choose a minister; and by these things did Paul approve himself to their consciences.

Secondly, All these may others have—bating for the publicness of his office and the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost. All ministers and all christians may have an approbation of God, and the testimony of their own consciences, and a witness in the consciences of others.

1. They may have the approbation of God; who certainly will not be wanting to the comfort of his faithful servants. Partly, because he hath promised not only to reward their sincerity at last, but to give them the comfort of it for the present: John xiv. 21, ‘He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.’ Let a man but love Christ, and be faithful to him, and he is capable of this promise: God will love him, and Christ will love him, and in testimony thereof, he will manifest himself to him. Christ knoweth the burden of believers, and what it costs them in the world to be faithful to him, and what sad hours many times they have, who make conscience of obedience. Now, to encourage them, the more seriously they engage in it, the more evidences and confirmations they shall have of his love to them, yea, sensible manifestations, and comfortable proofs thereof, shall still be given out to them, in their course of a constant, uniform, diligent, and self-denying obedience. Hidden love is as no love: Prov. xxvii. 5, ‘Open rebuke is better than secret love.’ As in our love to God, if it be not manifested, it is but a compliment and vain pretence; so in God’s love to us, though he hath not absolutely engaged for our comfort, yet he hath his times of allowing special manifestations of himself to his people, and lifting up the light of his countenance upon them. Surely God will not be altogether strange, reserved, and hidden to a loving, faithful, and obedient soul. They need more testimonies of his favour than others do, and they shall not be without them. Partly, because the Spirit of God is given us for this end, not only as a spirit of sanctification, but of revelation, to witness God’s acceptance of our persons and services, and the great things which he hath promised for us: 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, ‘What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God.’ None but the Holy Ghost can know God’s secrets, and reveal thereof to believers as much as

is needful for their salvation. For as man's own understanding can only know man's secrets, so none can know God's secret thoughts, but God's own Spirit. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, which only carrieth a proportion with worldly things, but the Spirit of God, which is given us to know the mind of God concerning us in Christ. He doth not only reveal the mysteries of salvation in general, but our own interest therein : Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The infinite mercies of God being bestowed on us, God would not have them concealed from us ; thus we may have the approbation of God.

2. We may have the testimony of conscience concerning our sincerity. For conscience is that secret spy which is privy to all our designs and actions, and taketh notice of all that we are and do ; therefore a man should or may know the acts of grace which he puts forth. It is hard to think that the soul should be a stranger to its own operations ; the spirit in man knoweth the things of a man, much more acts of grace ; partly, because they are the most serious and important actions of our life. Many acts may escape us for want of advertency, they not being of such moment ; but things that concern our eternal interests, and done with the most advisedness and seriousness, surely the man that is thus conversant about them, he will mind what he doth, and how he doth it : 1 John ii. 3, 'Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments : ' 1 Cor. ix. 26, 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly.' And partly, because acts of grace are put forth with difficulty, and with some strife and wrestling ; a man cannot believe, but he feeleth oppositions of unbelief : Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' A man cannot love God, and attend upon holy things, but he feeleth drowsiness and deadness in his heart, which must be overcome, though with difficulty : Cant. v. 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' A man cannot obey God, or do any serious good action, but the flesh will be opposing : Gal. v. 17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other ; ' and Rom. vii. 21, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.' Now things difficult, and carried on with opposition, must needs leave a notice and impression of themselves upon the conscience. And partly, because there is a special delight which accompanieth acts of grace, by reason of the excellency of the object they are conversant about, and by reason of the greatness and excellency of the power they are assisted withal, and the excellency and nobleness of the faculties they are acted by. Faith can hardly be exercised about the pardon of sin, or the hopes of glory, but a man findeth some peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13. Acts of love and hope are pleasant ; a prospect of eternity is delightful. Now any notable pleasure and delight of mind notifieth itself to the soul ; and therefore, upon the whole, we may have glorying if we love and fear God, and hope for eternal life from him, and thereupon study to approve ourselves to him ; conscience, which is privy to these things, will witness them to us.

3. We may leave a testimony in the consciences of others, if we keep up the majesty of our conversations ; for such is the excellency and honour

of religion and godliness, that when it shineth in its strength it dazzleth the eyes of beholders, even of wicked men, and maketh them wonder at it, and stand in awe of it. And where it is evident and eminent it will do so indeed; where christians are christians in a riddle, and show forth more of the flesh than of the spirit, there is no such thing; but where religion is in life and vigour it will discover itself: as John's sanctity extorted reverence and regard from Herod, Mark vi. 20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and strict man.' Holiness is the image of God, and so far commendeth its reverence and esteem; as the image of God in Adam was a terror to the beasts, and when nothing but the natural image was left, Gen. ix. 2, 'The fear and dread of you shall be upon every beast of the field;' so much more the spiritual image of God. Ahab stood in fear of Elijah. Certainly a godly life is convincing, and darts awe into the conscience. It is convincing either potentially or actually. Potentially, such as is apt to convince, and of its own nature tendeth thereunto, as Christ saith, John vii. 7, 'The world hateth me because I testify of it, that their works were evil.' Not only by reproofs, but conversation; the world would not acknowledge it, but they felt it; so those that bear witness against the evil courses of the world, either by the holiness of their doctrine or innocency of life, do convince others; they have a testimony in their consciences, though they will not acknowledge it. Or actually, which doth so convince, that it draweth out an acknowledgment. The former may be without the latter, as the sun is apt to enlighten, but it cannot make a blind man, or one that winketh hard, see. But, however, christians should live convincing lives, as pure streams run, though none drink of them. They may convert others, for conversion is facilitated by good conversation; yet religion is honoured by the testimony in their consciences, though they will not acknowledge it, at least it will be a testimony at the day of judgment against impenitent sinners.

Thirdly, All these we should look after—the approbation of God, the testimony of conscience, and a testimony in the consciences of others. In a moral consideration there are three beings—God, neighbour, self; and therefore we should approve ourselves to God, and look after this threefold approbation.

1. The approbation of God must be chiefly sought after first. We cannot be sincere without it. For sincerity is a straight and right purpose to please God in all things; and this should be our aim, to approve ourselves to God in all that we do, and therefore should do all things as in his eye and presence: Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou upright;' and Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives.' This is it which maketh men conscientious in all their actions, when they remember that they are now acting a part before the great God, who looketh on, either to reward or punish; it checketh sin, though never so secret, and though it might be carried on with security enough from men; yea when we may sin not only securely, but with advantage and profit: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' So, Job xxxi. 4, 'Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?' therefore he durst not give way to any sin. So, Ps. xliv. 21,

'Shall not God search this out, for he knoweth the secrets of the heart?' Secondly, it maketh us faithful in all our duties and services, when we strive to approve ourselves to God, and do all as in his presence, to the praise and glory of his name, and can appeal for our fidelity to no other judge but the great searcher of hearts, from whom we cannot be concealed. The apostle instanceth in two callings; one of the highest, and one of the meanest. One of the highest and of most importance to the other world, that of a minister: 2 Cor. iv. 2, 'Commending ourselves to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God;' and 1 Thes. ii. 4, 'So we preach the gospel, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.' A minister will never be faithful unless he first study to approve himself to God, and behaveth himself as in God's eye and presence, and one that is to give an account to God. So in the lowest, a christian servant, Eph. vi. 6, 7, 'Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, not to men.' So, Col. iii. 22, 'Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.' So, Titus ii. 10, 'Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' A christian servant useth all diligence in his master's business, whether he be absent or present, and fidelity in all things committed to his trust, though he might be false with secrecy enough; because he fears God, and would approve himself to him. Well, then, we must study to approve ourselves to God, and be alike in all places and companies, for all things are manifest to him.

2. The testimony of conscience must be regarded. First, because it is matter of true joy and comfort to a christian: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' I prove it from the office of conscience; it is both judge, witness, and executioner. Conscience is the judgment that every man maketh upon his actions, morally considered. As a man acteth or doth anything, so he is a party; as he loveth to view or censure it, so he is a judge; the morality considered as to their good or evil, rectitude or obliquity, in them, with respect to praise or dispraise, reward or punishment. Now joy is one part of executing the sentence of conscience, as fear is the other. Conscience is usually more felt after the act is over, than before or in it. For during the action the judgment of reason is not so clear and strong, the affections raising mists and clouds to darken the mind. In the act we feel the difficulties, or the pleasure of sin; but after the act, the violence of the affection ceaseth, and then reason taketh the throne, and doth affect the mind with joy or grief, according as a man hath done good or evil—with grief and terror, if the sensual appetite have been obeyed before itself; with delight, if he hath denied himself, and been faithful with God. Rewards and punishments are not altogether kept for the life to come. Hell is begun in an ill conscience, and a good conscience is heaven upon earth. Secondly, this joy that cometh from the testimony of conscience is very strong; it will fortify us against false imputations, when christians can say, We are not the men you make us to be by your false reports. Job saith, 'You shall not take away mine integrity, nor will I let my

innocency go till I die,' Job xxvii. 5. Paul would not pass for man's sentence, 1 Cor. iv. 3. Yea, it will fortify us against accusations internal, arising from defects and failings: 'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' Cant. v. 2. A gospel conscience will acquit us, yea, it comforts in sickness: Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'Remember, Lord, I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' A sick man when his appetite is gone, then he can eat nothing; a good conscience is a continual feast.

3. The latter testimony in the consciences of others is to be regarded. Here let me show you, (1.) That it is to be regarded; (2.) How far.

[1.] That it is to be regarded.

(1.) Partly, because the safety and credit of our service dependeth upon it. When we have a testimony in the consciences of men, it is a restraint to violence: Mark vi. 19, 20, 'Herodias would have killed John, but she could not, for Herod feared John, because he was a just man.' So Paulinus was spared by Valens. Wicked men fear the good, but hate them. When their hatred is greater than their fear, then no mercy; now it is grievous, when their fear is lessened by our scandals.

(2.) This is not affectation of praise, but doing things praise-worthy. Our care must be to do our duty, and trust God with our credit. Most men do otherwise; they would have honour from men, but neglect their duty to God: 'Yet honour me before the people,' 1 Sam. xv. 30. We are careless of service, and yet hunt for praise. Austin's rule is good: *Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi*—it is not a thing to be desired, but it must follow of its own accord; if it be the event of the action, let it not be the aim. So Aquinas: *Gloria bene contemnitur, nihil male agendo propter ipsam, et bene appetitur, nihil male agendo contra ipsam*—a good fame is well contemned by doing nothing evil for it; well desired by doing nothing evil against it.

(3.) Complying with the humours of men is dangerous, but leaving a witness in their consciences is safe; for conscience is God's deputy, the most serious faculty in us. Let us convince others, though we aim not at their applause: 1 Pet. iii. 16, 'Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed, that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.'

[2.] How far it may be regarded.

(1.) Surely so far as that we should not forfeit it by any sin, or imprudent action, or indiscretion of ours: 2 Cor. vi. 3, 'Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed;' so that the profession be not blamed, that the way of truth be not evil spoken of.

(2.) So far as to make a just apology, or vindication of our credit from aspersions. As Paul in the text, wherein he doth not intend his own apology, so much as the apology of the gospel. A holy life is the best apology: 1 Peter ii. 15, 'With well-doing we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Muzzle or stop the mouths of gain-sayers; yet we may make apologies, that the truth suffer not.

(3.) The utmost end must be the glory of God and the honour of the gospel: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'; 1 Peter ii. 12, 'That they may by your good works which they shall

behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' They do not glorify you, but God, that entertain a good opinion of the christian religion.

(4.) That though this threefold approbation must be looked after, yet every branch of it in its proper place. The order is, that we should first look to God, and then our own consciences, and afterwards a testimony in the consciences of others; for thus downward, the one succeeding the other, then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity, but if upward, and singly, or apart, it will not hold; as if a man had the approbation of others, but not of his own conscience; or if of his own conscience, but not of God; if of others, a man cannot rejoice in the testimony of another man's conscience, because another man saith I am a good man; for another man knoweth not the springs and motives of my actions. Or if I had the bare testimony of mine own conscience, that would not be sufficient for my comfort: 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified;' there is a higher judge, for I am blind, partial, and unadvised; till the Spirit concurreth with the witness of conscience, I cannot have a firm and solid peace: Rom. ix. 1, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost;' and Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' There are two witnesses, God's Spirit and our conscience. But now *descendendo*, it holdeth good, and many times one inferreth all the rest. If I have the approbation of God, his Spirit beareth witness with my conscience, and he hath also the hearts and tongues of men in his own hand, or if that be not, the approbation of God is absolutely necessary for my salvation; the testimony of conscience is very comfortable, and the third conduceth much to our safety, and service in the world. My salvation dependeth upon the approbation of God; my inward comfort upon the witness of his Spirit in my conscience; my outward peace and service upon a testimony in the consciences of others. I observe this to a double end.

(1st.) To direct us in point of duty. A good man should look more to God than to conscience; and to conscience more than to fame and report; to a good name in the last place. First he looketh to God, who is above conscience, and who is an infallible judge; and then he looketh to conscience, which is God's deputy; and then to good report among men. Invert this order, and great inconvenience will follow. Look to men above God, and it maketh a breach upon sincerity, John v. 44, and John xii. 42. Therefore it is not man, or glory and praise from him, but God alone, that the sincere heart is fixed upon; as those that run in a race (as the Scripture often compareth our christian course) did not regard the acclamations of the spectators, but the opinion of the *quaestor palestræ*, or the judge of the sports, who was to determine on whose side the victory was. So again, if the last be set before the second, it will be almost as bad. A christian cannot be safe, if he doth not value and prize the witness of a good conscience before the opinion of men, for then by humouuring men a man displeaseth conscience, which is his best friend of all things, and above all persons; next to God, a man should reverence his own conscience most. So again, if the second be set in the first place, if the judgment

of conscience be preferred before that of God, what will be the issue but the hardening of the wicked, whose blind conscience is set in the place of God? Prov. xvi. 2, ‘All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirit.’

(*2dly.*) To fortify our patience. A man must be approved of God, though his own heart speaketh bitter things to him; the sentence of God is to be sought in his word. If he mindeth his duty, seeketh after grace more than peace, is resolved to approve himself to God, though he cannot yet assure his heart before him, let the general comforts of christianity encourage him to wait. Duty thoroughly followed will bring peace in time. We must absolutely endeavour to seek the first. Again, if we have first and second, we must be thankful, though we want the third; and well satisfied, if approved of God, though disesteemed of the world. We must submit to God’s providence, and bear our burden of reproach, if we cannot overcome prejudices, however we must do nothing to feed it, nothing to procure it.

Use of all.

1. Let us study to approve ourselves to God, before whom we, and all that we do, are manifest; sincerity beginneth there, seeketh the approbation of God: ‘He is commended whom God commendeth,’ 1 Cor. x. 18. Our final sentence must come out of his mouth. Next let us look to this, that we glory not in appearance, but in heart, that we may have the solid rejoicing of conscience: Job xxvii. 6, ‘My heart shall not reproach me till I die.’ Faith, love and hope will only give us that; not external privileges. Oh, then, let us keep up the majesty of our profession, that so we may have a testimony in the consciences of men: it will be our safety. In the primitive times they invested christians with bears’ skins, and then baited them as bears. So Satan is first a liar, and then a murderer, 1 John ii. 4.

Use 2. Here is something to defend the poor ministers of Christ Jesus. I trust you desire to glorify God, and save souls, and that out of hope, fear and love. Some glory in outward advantages only, their church privileges; but I trust we can glory in heart. They burden us with imputations. No enemies, next the devil, are like minister to minister: *Ab implacabilibus odiis theologorum libera nos, Domine!* We all own the same bible, believe the same creed, are baptized into the same profession; if any be more serious in it than others, should they therefore be discomfited? If it be their desire to save souls, and guide them to their eternal rest, it is ours also. So far as they glory in heart, we do even as they.

SERMON XX.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause—2 Cor. v. 13.

PAUL, glorying in his fidelity, was charged by the false apostles with two things: (1.) That he was proud; (2.) Mad. The first objection

is answered, ver. 12; the second in the text. As to the charge of emotion of mind, or madness, (1.) There is a seeming concession, or taking their charge for granted: if it be madness, it is for God. His reply is, that he had spoken these things for God's glory, and their salvation: if I extol my ministry, which you count madness, it is for the glory of God, that the gospel be not brought into contempt; if I speak humbly of myself, as becometh sober men, it is for your profit. (2.) By way of correction, he sheweth the true cause of it, which was a high constraining love to Christ, ver. 14.

Observe in the text two points—

1. That carnal men count the holy servants of God to be a sort of mad folks.
2. That a christian in all postures of spirit aimeth at the glory of God.

For the first point—

1. I shall show you, that it is so.
2. I shall inquire what it is in christianity that is usually counted madness.
3. The reasons of it.
4. To show how justly this may be retorted—to show that it is a perverse judgment and censure, which rather belongeth to themselves than those that fear God.

First, That it is so, the scriptures evidence, 2 Kings ix. 11. When God sent a prophet to anoint Jehu, the captain said, 'Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?' God's messengers have been so accounted from time to time. So Jeremiah by Shemaiah, 'This man is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks.' The same thought Festus of Paul: Acts xxvi. 24, 'Too much learning hath made thee mad. I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness.' Yea, the Lord Jesus himself could not escape this imputation, no, not from his own kinsmen, for when he was abroad doing good, and promoting the affairs of his kingdom, and constituting apostles, it is said, Mark iii. 21, 'When his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him; for they said, "He is beside himself," ἐξέστη, as here the false teachers ἐξέστημεν, "if we be beside ourselves." Another time his enemies: John x. 20, 'Many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?' And still in all ages the zealous are counted frantic, fanatical, heady, rash, furious, and men beside themselves, because they have entirely given up themselves to do the will of God, whatever it costs them.

Secondly, What is that in christianity which is usually counted madness? What it was in Paul, interpreters agree not. Grotius thinketh his enemies did upbraid him with his ecstasies; he was converted by a trance and rapture, whereof he giveth an account, 2 Cor. xii. 1-4, &c. Others, his self-denial. Paul had no regard to himself; his great purpose was to serve God and the church; as here he professeth he was ready to be accounted mad or sober, so God might be glorified, and their profit promoted. Some, his acting or speaking in zeal, above that which is ordinarily called temper and sobriety, which is indeed the dull pace of the world. Certainly Paul was an extraordinary person, and had a deep sense of the other world, and therefore the carnal will be no fit

judges of his spirit; but most simply and agreeable to the context, to speak thus largely of himself, seemed to them to be the work of a distracted, or foolish person. And so, 2 Cor. xi, 'I wold to God you could bear with me ;' and vers. 16, 17, 'I say again, let no man think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.' If it had been for his own honour, the objection would have force. But what he did herein, he meant for the glory of God and the gospel.

But that which is counted madness ordinarily in christians, is either seriousness in religion ; when men will not flaunt, and rant, and please the flesh, as others do, but take time for meditation, and prayer, and other holy duties, they that choose a larger sort of life, think them mopish and melancholy ;—or else self-denial ; when they are upon the hopes of the world to come, dead to present interests, and can forsake all for a naked Christ, the world thinks this folly and madness. In the judgment of the flesh it seemeth to be a mad and foolish thing to do all things by the prescript of the word, and to live upon the hope of an unseen world. Or else zeal in a good cause. It is in itself a good thing : Gal. iv. 18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.' But the world is wont to call good evil ; as astronomers call the glorious stars by horrid names, as the serpent, the greater and lesser bear, and the dog-star, and the like. God will not be served in a cold and careless fashion : Rom. xii. 11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' This will not suit with that lazy pace which pleaseth the world, therefore they speak evil of it. Another is a holy singularity, as Noah was an upright man in a corrupt age, Gen. vi. 9. And we are bidden, Rom. xii. 2, not to conform ourselves to this world. Now to walk contrary to the course of this world, and the stream of common examples, and to draw hatred upon ourselves, and hazarding our interests, for cleaving close to God and his ways, is counted foolish by them who wholly accommodate themselves to their interests : John xv. 19, 'The world will love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Once more, fervours of devotion, or an earnest conversing with God in humble prayer ; the world, who are sunk in flesh and matter, are little acquainted with the elevations, and enlargements of the spirit, think all to be imposture and enthusiasm. And though praying by the Spirit be a great privilege, Jude 20, Rom. viii. 26, Zec. xii. 10, yet it is not relished by them ; a flat, dead way of praying suiteth their gust better. Christ compareth the gospel to new wine, which will break old bottles, Mat. ix. 17 ; as fasting in spirit, praying in spirit. A little dead, insipid taplash, or spiritless worship, is more for the world's turn. *Missa non mordet.*

Thirdly, The reasons why it is so.

1. Natural blindness : 2 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' They are incompetent judges : Prov. xxiv. 7, 'Wisdom is too high for a fool.' For though by nature we have lost our light, we have not lost our pride : Prov. xxvi. 16, 'The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.' Though men's way be but

a sluggish, lazy, dead way, yet they have an high conceit of it, and censure all that is contrary, or but a degree removed above it. And therefore is it that worldly and carnal men judge perversely and unrighteously of God's servants, and count zeal and forwardness in religious duties to be but madness; which is a notable instance of the miserable blindness of our corrupt nature.

2. Prejudicate malice, which keepeth them from a nearer inspection of the beauty of God's ways, and the reasons and motives which his children are governed by. Their eyes are blinded by the god of this world, 2 Cor iv. 4, and their own forestalled prejudices; and then who is so blind as they that will not see? In the ancient apologies of christians, they complained that they were condemned unheard, and without any particular inquiry into their principles and practices: *Nolentes audire, quod auditum damnare non possunt*, Tertull. They would not inquire, because they had a mind to hate. And Cælius Secundus Curio hath a notable passage in the Life of Galeacius Caracciolas, which was the occasion of his conversion. The story is thus. One John Francis Casarta, who was enlightened with the knowledge of the gospel, was very urgent with this nobleman, his cousin, to come and hear Peter Martyr, who then preached at Naples. One day, by much entreaty, he was drawn to hear him, not so much with a desire to learn and profit, as out of curiosity. Peter Martyr was then opening the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and showing how blind and perverse the judgment of the natural understanding is in things spiritual; and also the efficacy of the word of God on those in whom the Spirit worketh. Among other things he useth this similitude, that if a man riding in an open country should see afar off men and women dancing together, and should not hear the music according to which they dance and tread out their measures, he would think them to be fools and madmen, because they appear in such various motions, and antic gestures and postures: But if he come nearer, so as to hear the musical notes, according to which they dance, and observe the regularity of the exercise, he will change his opinion of them, and will not only be delighted with the exactness thereof, but find a motion in his mind to stand still and behold them, and to join with them in the exercise. The same, saith he, happeneth to them who when they see a change of life, company, fashions, conversation in others, at their first sight impute it to their folly and madness, but when they begin more intimately to weigh the thing, and to hear the harmony of the Spirit of God and his word, by which rule this change and strictness is directed and required, that which they judged to be madness and folly they see to be wisdom and reason, and are moved to join themselves with them, and imitate them in their course of life, and forsake the world and the vanities thereof, that they may be sanctified in order to a better life. This similitude stuck in the mind of this noble marquis (as he was wont to relate it to his familiar friends), that ever afterward he wholly applied his mind to the search of the truth and the practice of holiness, and left all his honours and vast possessions for a poor life, in the profession of the gospel at Geneva. Well then, it is because prejudice condemneth things at a

distance, and men will not take a nearer view of the regularity of the ways of godliness.

3. Because they live contrary to that life which they affect, and do by their practice condemn it. This reason is given by the apostle, 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them into the same excess of riot : speaking evil of you.' Worldly men think there is a kind of happiness in their sort of life, which is so plausible and pleasing to the flesh, they cannot but wonder at it ; and as long as they are carnal, they cannot discern those spiritual reasons which make believers abhor their kinds of conversation, and therefore censure and judge them as a sort of crazy brains, that do not know what is good for them. Men that live in any sinful course are unwilling that any should part company with them in their way wherein they will go, that there may be none to make them ashamed, which testify that their deeds are evil, John vii. 7, or to condemn by their practice what they allow, Heb. xi. 7; and the sweetness of Christ's service is wholly hid from them, and therefore are never more furiously confident than when most deceived and most blind, and others appear in a real contradiction to their humours.

Fourthly, Let us see how justly this crimination may be retorted, and that their way is properly madness. And in this sense bedlam is everywhere : the whole world is a dreaming, distracted world, a mere incurable bedlam.

1. If you will stand to the judgment of God, the case is determined, that every carnal man is a fool, and out of his wits. There is all the reason in the world, that he should be counted a fool, and one beside himself, whom God calleth fool, for he is best able to judge, because he is the fountain of wisdom : Ps. xlix. 13, the Holy Ghost hath determined the case, 'This their way is their folly.' Job's hypocrites, and Solomon's fools, and those whom John calleth the world, and Paul the carnal, they are all the same company, only diversified in the notion.

2. We will give them as partial a judge as can be. First, In the judgment of their own hearts, they are fools and madmen when they are serious. As when a man is convinced by the Spirit of God, he cometh to himself ; as it is said of the prodigal, Luke xv. 17, 'He came to himself.' The first thing that he is convinced of is the folly and madness of his carnal course. Therefore every one of us must become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; a child of God, when he cometh out of a temptation, Ps. lxxiii. 22, 'I was as a beast before thee ;' Titus iii. 3, 'We were sometimes foolish,' madmen, or men out of our wits, in regard of our perverse choice ; and till we repent, we are never ourselves ; then we are in our wits again. The prodigal grew in his folly, till he came to his father ; and he went not to his father, till he came to himself. We then come to ourselves when we know our folly, mourn for it, and seriously amend it. The first degree of wisdom is to know our folly ; the second to turn from it, and betake ourselves to a wiser course. Secondly, When he cometh to die : Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Why fool ? Because everything was provided for but that which should be most provided for, his precious and immortal soul. He that pro-

videth but for half, and that the worser half, and that but for a short time, is a fool. In his greatest extremity his eyes are opened: Jer. xvii. 11, ‘At his latter end, he shall be a fool.’ In the conviction of his own conscience, his heart will rave at him. O fool! O vain madman! death bloweth away all vain conceits and fancies, when all our vain pursuits and projects will leave us in the dirt. Thirdly, Plain reason will evidence carnal men to be beside themselves. I prove it thus. There is in madness two things, *amentia et furor*, folly and fury. That there are both these in a carnal man, I shall prove by these demonstrations, for a taste.

[1.] There is in them the folly of a distracted man, or one bereft of his senses, even in the wisest worldlings and sensualists.

(1.) Though they acknowledge a God, by whom and for whom they were made, and from whom they are fallen by sin, and cannot be happy but in returning to him, yet the worldly man knoweth no misery but in bodily and worldly things, no happiness but in pleasing his senses. The beginning, progress, and end of his course is all from himself, in himself, and to himself, looking only to things near at hand; every toy that pleaseth his humour is good to him, poureth out his heart upon it and loseth himself for it, and will neither admit information of his error, nor reformation of his practice, till death destroy him, and the God that made him is forgotten days without number: Rom. iii. 10, ‘There is none that understandeth, and seeketh after God.’

(2.) They that neglect their main business, and leave it undone, and run up and down, they know not why, nor wherefore, surely they act like mad and distracted, not like wise and rational men. Now, alas! worldly and carnal men spend their time and cares for nothing, like children and boys that follow a bubble blown out of a shell of soap, till it break and dissolve. This is the most serious business of worldly wise men, they court a vain world, which they seem to count religion; and though they believe eternal life and death, yet they make no great matter of it. And though all their life should be spent in fleeing from wrath to come, and seeking after heaven in the first place, yet they never seriously inquire whether they shall be in heaven or in hell. They know they must shortly die, and be in one of them, either endless joy or misery; yet they have not the wit to avoid damnation, or to prefer heaven above inconsiderable vanities; but, like busy ants, run up and down their molehill, lay out their time and thoughts upon impertinences; and some of them are blaspheming of God, and scoffing at the religion they do profess; others whoring and debauching; others flying in the face of them that would curb their folly; others running after preferment, and so eager in the pursuit of some worldly honour, which they know to be slippery; but they run after it, as if it were their only felicity, over-running one another like boys at foot-ball, and contending so earnestly, as if it were some great, desirable prize; others grasping after the world with both hands, though within a little while it must fall to them know not who, and be spent they know not how. Come to any of those and interpose a few sober and serious words about eternity, they will answer as Antigonus, when one presented him with a treatise of *summum bonum*, or true happiness, he answered ‘I am not at leisure.’ Or as Felix, when his conscience wambled, said to

Paul, I will send for thee at a more convenient season. Now what are all these but a company of madmen? Their great business lieth by, and trifles take up their time and care and thoughts. Men are sundry ways out of their wits, and only one way in them, that is, when the true fear of God and the sense of the other world ruleth in their hearts. But every one is so wedded to his lusts, that they will not consider and repent, or suffer admonition. Oh, the folly and madness of the world! Oftentimes it is seen that men are counted mad, who are bound in fetters, when madder men are walking at liberty.

(3.) Another instance of their madness is their perverse choice. He is a wise merchant that selleth all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii. 46. A child will prefer an apple, or a nut, before a precious pearl; and a madman will part with things of value for a trifles. Is that man wise that selleth his birthright for a morsel of meat? Heb. xii. 15; that dammeth his soul, and selleth his salvation, for so small a pleasure as sin affordeth? that to gratify a lump of flesh, that was dust in its composition, and will be dust again in its dissolution, with a little temporary vain pleasure, hazards his immortal soul, with all the interests and concernsments thereof, and changes his part in God and glory for a little carnal satisfaction?

(4.) They that are the worst enemies to themselves, certainly they act as mad and distracted men; as you would count those deservedly mad who are ready to cut their own throats, and gash and wound themselves, and rend and tear themselves, and do themselves a mischief. Now, who is a worse enemy to himself than a carnal person? Prov. viii. 36, 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: and all they that hate me love death.' They are self-destroyers and self-murderers in the worst sense, for they destroy their own souls; they make it their business to bar up the gates of heaven against themselves, and kindle and blow up the unquenchable fire, wherewith they shall be tormented for evermore; and with a great deal of cost and stir and care, do labour for damnation; it is not their intent, but is the necessary result of their actions; it is *finis operis*, but not *finis operantis*; it tends to this: Rom. vi. 21, 'The end of these things is death.'

(5.) In their confidence and presumption. As the madman at Athens challenged all the ships that came into the harbour for his own; so they believe they are running to heaven when they are posting to hell; like rowers in a boat, they look one way and go contrary. He is called a foolish builder who would raise a stately building upon a sandy foundation, Mat. vii. 24; so to lay on such a structure of confidence upon such slender grounds as they have, to hope for anything from God, is an instance of their madness.

(6.) In boasting of their folly and madness. Nature is much distorted; man fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency; shame is translated; we are confident where we should be ashamed, and are ashamed where we should be confident. We should own God and religion with an holy boldness, but we conceal it, and sneak pitifully; but glory in our shame, Phil. iii. 19, as if a man besmeared with dung should cry it up for an ornament. We are conceited of our carnal practices. 'The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,' saith Solomon, Prov. xii. 15; and so we glory in that which should be matter of

mourning and confusion of face to us: Eccles. x. 3, 'When he also that is a fool, walketh in the way, his wisdom saileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.' If it be meant of the wicked fool, it is meant of his glorying in his shame, and his boasting of his sins as ornaments.

[2.] Now for the other property, fury. It is also the madness that is in carnal and worldly men: Eccles. ix. 3, 'The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart.' There is a violent, heady, pertinacious pressing to evil and sin. How fierce and furious are men in a way of sin, under the passionateness of any lust! The slaves of sin are as a man possessed with a legion of devils in the Gospel, who rent and tore his clothes, and all the cords wherewith they bound him; nay, they are worse than he, for in his fury he broke his bonds, but they double and strengthen theirs. When a man is given over to the rage and madness of his own nature, how is the soul overcome by boisterous and filthy lusts! They go on furiously and frowardly, nothing can put a stop to their raging lusts, but they cast off all restraints of reason, and conscience and grace. The prophet said, Jer. l. 38, 'They are mad upon their idols,' blind with fury against the ways of God, and the church: Ps. cii. 9, 'Mine enemies reproach me all the day, they are mad against me.' Now this madness of nature is seen in that all respects of danger and loss, fear of death, judgment, and hell, will not contain them within their duty; they run upon God himself, and the thick bosses of his buckler, Job. xvi. 21. Every sin is a contest with God, an holding war with the almighty, 1 Cor. x. 22; and wilful sin an open and a plain contest, as if we could make our party good against him; and when we remain under the power of a carnal mind, we are in a state of enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. And this is such a piece of madness as if a private man could by the help of his family, his private house, prevail against all the forces of the kingdom. This madness sheweth itself too by raging at reproofs; the mad world cannot endure those that would stop them in the way to hell. Therefore the seriously godly, whose lives are a standing reproof, are most hated by them: Prov. xxix. 27; and Isa. lix. 15, 'He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey.' Now you see where madness is to be charged; either upon the servants of God, who make it their business to please him, or upon the worldly and the carnal. Let them wash themselves from this imputation as well as they can, it will stick to them; and the only sober people in the world are the strict and religious.

Use 1. Let us bear it with patience, if we be esteemed madmen for God's service, and our strictness and fidelity to him. Think it not strange, nor be offended at the matter, though ye be thus censured of the carnal men of the world; they can no more judge of these things than blind men of colours, and their dislike is many times a token of God's approbation. No wise man going into bedlam will be offended to be railed at and spit upon; he looketh for no other, and so will not be moved at their madness. If we be not thus minded, the least offences will draw us from our duty. Let us not then forbear these practices, which are thought vanity and folly by carnal men, if they be for God's glory, and the good of our own and other souls; nor be

disheartened with them ; we must be contented to be accounted mad for God, in that which the world judgeth madness or discretion.

2. Let us vindicate religion from this imputation. ‘Wisdom is justified of her children,’ Mat. xi. 19. Those who have received wisdom, true wisdom from God, and are obedient disciples of it, they will defend true wisdom as often as it is condemned by the world.

But how shall wisdom be justified by us?

Ans. 1. By disclaiming and renouncing them who adopt fooleries into their religion, and betray it to the scorn of all considering men. In this class and rank I put the Papists and the Quakers. The first, by a pageantry of many ridiculous ceremonies, have so disguised the christian religion, that it is made contemptible. Therefore is it that where this religion hath most absolutely commanded, atheism aboundeth ; for the heart of a rational man can find no satisfaction in these things, nothing of the majesty of God and the power of his ordinances, where they are made so sense-pleasing, and accommodated with such worldly pomp and silly rudiments, which can only prevail upon the weaker sort of spirits. The more knowing and searching wits cannot but secretly scorn those things in their hearts ; and therefore no other religion being allowed and countenanced, they lie under a dangerous temptation to atheism and unbelief. The other sort are the Quakers, a sort of people, whose principles are not yet fixed, but in the forming ; being of a vertiginous spirit, are a ready prey for Satan, and fit instruments for him to work by, to the great disturbance of religion, or to disgrace and shame it, and betray it to scorn. Now the main of what their religion hitherto hath been is to teach men to cast away their bands, and their cuffs, and the trimmings of their garments, and to deny civilities, and to teach men to say, *Thou* : these make religion ridiculous, and prostitute scripture phrase to scorn, and by them the way of truth is evil spoken of.

2. By pleading for it. Surely godliness is not madness, but the highest wisdom. This argument will clear it: wisdom lieth in the fixing of a right end, and the choice of apt and good means, and a dexterous pursuit of these means. These things are evident to reason. Now in all these respects, there is not a wiser man than a godly man ; and the more godly he is, the more he excelleth in wisdom ; and therefore folly and madness can no more be ascribed to godliness, than heat to the snow, or cold to the fire.

[1.] He fixeth upon an higher end than all the rest of the world doth, which is the pleasing, glorifying and enjoying God. Alas ! what is the heaping up of wealth, the getting of a little honour, or designing to wallow in ease and pleasure as to these things ? He is wiser, that is wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 16; that chooseth God for his portion ; God hath given him counsel in his reins. All the wisdom of the world is earthly, sensual and devilish, James i. 3. Others are foolish and madmen. Who are wiser ? They that run after painted butterflies, or spend their time in making clay-pies, like children, or sucking at the dry breast of the creature ? or those who are able to govern commonwealths, or do things for public good ? Who are wiser ? They that can pass by their worldly designs, to carry on their heavenly ? or they that are wise for the present, and fools to all eternity ?

[2.] He chooseth apt and fit means. He takes not an uncertain course in the world, but goeth by the certain rule of God's word : Deut. iv. 6, 'Keep them, and do them, for this is your wisdom ;' Jer. viii. 9, 'They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them ?' 'And the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,' Ps. xix. 7. The more a man keepeth to the word of the Lord, the more wise ; and as far as he abateth, he sheweth folly and madness, as others do.

[3.] For diligent pursuit, being heedful ; Eph. v. 15, 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.' Avoiding what may be a snare, they are true to their end by being serious and diligent : Eccles. x. 2, 'A wise man's heart is at his right hand.' By self-denial, spareth no cost, selleth all for the pearl of great price, Mat. xiii., though to despise the delights and honours and pleasures of the world seemeth the greatest folly and madness to carnal men—nothing venture, nothing have : Rom. viii. 6, 'To be carnally minded is death, and to be spiritually minded is life, and peace ;' he loseth something, but getteth much better. If a man should keep his money by him, and neglect a gainful purchase, that would yield him an hundred-fold, this would be accounted folly among worldly-wise men. What is their course who venture death and eternal destruction, rather than be at the pains to save their souls ?

3. Let us wipe off this reproach by our conversations ; not by abating our zeal and diligence in the heavenly life, but by a prudent behaviour, giving no occasion, by any ridiculous actions of ours, to blemish the holy profession. I will urge but this one argument, that a christian is to show forth the virtues of God, or the *ἀπετὰς*, praises of God, 1 Peter ii. 9, as an image is to represent the party. Now the virtues of God are chiefly three—wisdom, power, and goodness. A christian is to show forth God's power, by his reverence and awefulness, not daring to do anything that God hath forbidden ; his goodness of benignity by his delight and readiness of obedience ; as his beneficial goodness, so his moral goodness by our holiness : 1 Peter i. 16, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' So also his wisdom ; we show he is wise by whose counsel we are guided, and wait on God for the direction of his word, and the Spirit will help you to do it : Jam. i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth no man.'

Use 3. Is caution to carnal men. Let them forbear the censures of the godly, and study their own case. We charge them with madness and folly, not to upbraid them, but to convince them ; not out of malice, as they do, but compassion, that they may repent, and grow wise to salvation. Repentance is called *μετάνοια*, a returning to our wits again. What is that ?

[1.] When you begin to be serious. When the conversion of the Gentiles to the christian faith is prophesied of, it is said, Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn to the Lord.' As long as men are thoughtless, and mindless of heavenly things, they know not what they do, but are as men sleeping and distracted, not making use of the common light of reason, or those principles which are ingrafted into the hearts of all men. What am I ? Who made

me? What do all these creatures proclaim, all that I can see and feel, but an eternal power? Have I any interest in him? Alas, they went on madly before, sleeping in the lap of carnal pleasures, when the Philistines were upon them; or else plunging themselves in a gulf of business and worldly distractions, and there they lie in the deep waters, till they be ready to sink to the bottom. Oh, remember, and return; you are undone for ever, if you do not escape out of this estate.

[2.] When you make a business of it to seek God's favour by Christ. This must be *τὸ ἔργον*, your main work: John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent;' not a matter by the by, but your chief work, your first care, Mat. vi. 33. When our chiefest care is about our souls, and settling our eternal interests, then we begin to act like men again. Otherwise, when we only cleave to earthly things, we live like beasts, and madmen; all his care is to maintain his animal life, so do the beasts. But when we begin to seek after spiritual and eternal things, immortal food, garments that shall never wax old, laying up treasure in heaven, then we act as those that have an immortal soul. Solomon putteth the question, Eccles. iii. 21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, or the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?' The words may bear a double sense: Who knoweth? That is, who can collect and gather from the courses and practices of men, that they have a soul distinct from the beasts? they are as greedy upon bodily things, and the sustentation of the present life only, as the beasts are. Now who knoweth it? Who doth acknowledge it, and consider it, so as to look out for food for the immortal soul, to get it adorned with saving grace, sanctified by the Spirit of God? Who, till he be enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, and is soundly convinced of heavenly things? Eph. i. 17, 18. But now when a man maketh it his first and main care, then he doth know, or practically acknowledge, he hath a soul which doth go upward, distinct from the beast's, which doth go downward. The man is come to himself again, when he maketh it his business to obtain pardon and eternal life by Christ.

[3.] When they stand in awe of God, and are afraid to disobey his laws: Job xx. 28, 'Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding; and Prov. ix. 10, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' It is the first point and the chiefest point, first both in time and dignity. Now what is the fear of God but to be sensible of God's majesty and presence, that we dare not sin against him and affront him to his face? Wicked men, that can break through a commandment when it standeth full in their way, are simple and witless, for they enter into a plain contest with God, which none but a madman would do: Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded; and Ps. cxix. 161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' A choice frame of heart! more than if a thousand dangers stood in the way. He dareth not, whatever profit or pleasure might ensue upon the breach, or danger for not breaking through.

[4.] When they delight to do his will and promote his glory. For they have entirely devoted themselves to God : Rom. xiv. 7, 8, ‘For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s ;’ and 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ‘What ! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God ? And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ He owneth God’s interests in him. Carnal policy and spiritual wisdom differ mainly in the end and scope ; the one hath a care to please and glorify God ; the other to advance himself and his own natural interests.

[5.] When he is ever getting more fitness for heaven, and clearer evidences for heaven. Providing for the time to come is wisdom, Luke xvi. When he would die wisely, his heart is more taken up about his everlasting estate, what he shall do when his soul is turned out of doors. Thus have I showed you how carnal men may know when they are in their wits again.

SERMON XXI.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God : or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.—2 COR. v. 13.

THE text containeth the answer to the second imputation : ‘Thou art beside thyself.’ Paul answers,

1. By way of concession. He may be, as to appearance and to their judgment, sometimes mad, and sometimes sober.

2. By way of exception and vindication.

[1.] From his end : If mad, it is $\tau\hat{\omega} \Theta\epsilon\hat{\omega}$; if sober, it is $\dot{\nu}\mu\hat{\nu}\nu$.

[2.] From his principle—the love of God : and so bringeth in his third motive, ver. 14. Paul, whether beside himself (as they thought) or sober, he still sought the glory of God and the good of the church.

Doct. A christian in all his speeches and actions, and all postures of spirit, should still aim at the glory of God.

1. We shall consider this truth with some observations, as it lieth in this place.

2. Some reasons of the point in general.

First, The observations are these :—

1. Observe what a change and difference the power of the Lord’s grace worketh in a man. Paul confesseth of himself, Acts xxvi. 11, that he was, when a Pharisee, mad against God : ‘I was exceeding mad against this way.’ And now the text representeth him as one (in the judgment of the Corinthians at least) beside himself ; but he telleth you it was for God. As formerly he was an instance of the cursed vigour of nature, so now of the sacred power of grace. It is but reason that we should do as much for God as we did before for Satan : Rom. vi. 19, ‘I speak after the manner of men, because of the

infirmity of your flesh ; that, as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity : even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.' That is, this is a moderate proposal, and in condescension to their infirmity, requiring the least that in any reason could be required of them : that they should have the same care of holiness now, and be as diligent to obey the precepts of Christ, as before they were industrious, and earnest to serve their lusts and vile affections. In strict justice, he might require a greater care to secure their life and salvation, than ever they had expressed in ruining and damning themselves ; but he would deal with them in the modest and most easy and equitable manner, because the flesh cannot bear too much severity, or too high expressions of duty. *'Ανθρώπινον λέγω* signifieth, that which hath nothing extraordinary in it, or which is common among men—a modest human proposal, that they should serve God as earnestly as they had served the devil ; that, at least, they should do as much for him, now they had better work, better wages, and the best master, as before they had done for sin.

2. That the love of Christ is the root and principle of this sincere aim at the glory of God in all that we do ; for when the apostle giveth an account of it, he presently addeth, in the next verse, 'for the love of Christ constraineth us.' To seek God's glory and the good of the church is the fruit of love to God. There is a twofold love—the love of desire and the love of delight. The love of desire is a seeking love ; it is ever running after God, that we may enjoy more of him. The love of delight is a pleasing love ; it maketh us study to honour and please God in all things. Once love God sincerely, and his honour will be dearer to you than your own interests ; then you will be referring anything to him and studying to advance his glory. Men's aims are as their affections are. Self-love maketh us mind ourselves and please ourselves ; and carnal lusts do pervert and crook and bend the soul to inferior things, which will bias and poise in every action. There is nothing but the difference of a notion between the chief good and last end ; what is apprehended as our chief good and felicity will certainly be our last end and aim.

3. How nearly the glory of God and the good of the church are conjoined ; for when the apostle asserteth the sincerity of his aims, he mentioneth both Θεῷ and Ἰψῶν—for God, and for the good of the church. And in the method of the Lord's prayer, this is evident : next to the hallowing of God's name, we beg the coming of his kingdom. First we desire the glorifying and hallowing of the name of God, that he may be known, loved and honoured in the world, and well pleased in us, and we may delight in him as our ultimate end ; then that his kingdom of grace may be enlarged, that the kingdom of glory, as to the perfected church of the sanctified, may come ; that mankind may more perfectly submit themselves to God, and be saved by him. His glory is the great end, and the coming of his kingdom is the first and primary means ; for God's glory is more manifest in his kingdom than in any other of his works. His wisdom and power and goodness is more seen and acknowledged in you than in all the world besides. All God's providences tend first to God's glory, next to the good of the

church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God, if they do not seek the church's welfare: the lessening, troubling, disordering of the kingdom of God is the crossing his glory. If we would aim at God's glory, we must seek the good of his people, and to our power promote the church's welfare.

4. Here are different actions mentioned—if we be beside ourselves, or if we be sober; but both designed by Paul for God's glory and their good. So it holdeth good in all other things: if sublime and profound in opening the deep mysteries of the gospel; if perspicuous and plain in obvious truths, still for God; if deep and profound, not to set up our worth, but to help the growth of the saints, that they may not always keep to their ABC in religion: Heb. v. 14, ‘But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.’ If facile and plain, be sure it be not the fruit of our laziness, contenting ourselves with obvious notions, because they cost us little labour and pains; but a sincere aim at profit, and in condescension to the meanest: Rom. i. 14, ‘I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and unwise.’ So in other actions civil or sacred; whether we eat or drink, or pray, or worship, still to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. Look, as the lines of a circle come from the several parts of the circumference, but they all end in the centre; so whatever we do, we must do it all for God. There may be different ways to the same scope; Paul that circumcised Timothy, that he might not give scandal to the Jews, Gal. vi, 3, rebuketh Peter sorely for complying with the Jews, to the offence of the Gentiles, Gal. ii. 11–14; which reproof Peter took in good part, as being in an error. The use and unseasonable use of christian liberty are distinct things; so of different persons: Rom. xiv. 6, ‘One eateth, and another eateth not: but both to the Lord.’ An house that is on fire, some are for quenching, others are for pulling down; here is difference in opinion, but an agreement in scope, that the fire do no further mischief; so for reforming the church, some are for a total withdrawing, others hope to mend the cause, as not remediless. But for the same person, as Paul, in the different postures of spirit, if a man be sober for God, he will the better be beside himself for God, that is, in the judgment of the world; so, *e contra*, the prophet proveth they did not fast for God, because they did not eat for God, Zech. vii. 5, 6.

5. That when we are most in danger to seek our own glory and honour, then we must be most careful to fix our intention aright. Paul, when he spake modestly of himself and ministry, or did simply evangelise without any commendation of himself or his ministry, then it is *ὑμῖν*—we use all means to bring you to Christ; if we be sober, it is for your sakes. But when he was forced to assert the sincerity of it against the calumnies of the false teachers, then it is *τῷ Θεῷ*. I speak not this for myself, but for God, for the credit of the gospel. Certain it is that in all things we should seek the glory of God, whether full or fasting, mad in the world's account, or sober; but the question is, whether in every action a christian is always bound to think of the glory of God?

I answer; God's glory may be intended habitually and virtually, or

else explicitly and actually ; that is, either by a formal, noted, observed thought, or by the impression of a powerful habit ; as a man that maketh it his scope to go to such a place, doth not always think of it, though he is travelling thither, and the end of his journey, though it be not always in his mind, yet it directeth his motions. This purpose must be rooted in our hearts—to refer all that we do to the glory of God, though in every particular action we do not think of it. But then here a case of conscience ariseth : When the virtual intention sufficeth not without formal noted thoughts ? The answer to it is—

[1.] That the purpose of promoting God's glory should be often renewed, because it is the description of wicked men, that 'God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. They have a multitude of thoughts, but they have nothing of God in them. And the wicked are described by this, that they forget God, Ps. ix. 17 ; they seldom or never think with themselves, whether they please or displease, honour or dishonour him. But the godly will be often directing, fixing, elevating the intention of their minds : 'O God, I lift my heart to thee,' Ps. xxv. 1. The end is our measure. Now an expert carpenter that worketh by line, though he doth not in every stroke, yet very often will be trying his work by the line and square. Besides the end is our motive, as well as our measure ; it addeth strength and vigour to the soul in acting. Therefore to excite my drooping and languishing heart, I should often think for whom I am working, and for what end.

[2.] In all momentous actions I must actually intend the glory of God. In lesser things the general frame and bent of my heart to please God in all things sufficeth. There are certain actions of moment, and such as we make a business of, we need there explicitly to call in the help of Christ, and expressly to aim at the glory of God. There are some actions to the performance of which we go forth in a general confidence ; others which are not undertaken without deliberation and invocation. There must be special direction of the intention of the soul. Suppose a minister in preaching the gospel : 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God, by us.' Suppose any hazardous voyage, the disposing ourselves into any course of life, or abiding relation, we must be sure to aim at God's glory.

[3.] Weak habits and inclinations need express, formal, observed thoughts, for without them christians cannot do their work : but to powerful and strong habits, where men have in a manner naturalised themselves to a godly course, the strength of the general inclination sufficeth. A weak christian needs often to consider, that he is acting for God, and approving himself to God, that he may keep more close and faithfully to his work, and be true to his end. Now the habits of grace being weak in most, they cannot easily keep afoot God's interest in their souls, if they should seldom think of him, and their obligation to him.

[4.] And lastly, tempted christians, and when they are in danger to seek themselves, must renew and revive the actual intention. As when we do any public action for God, which hath somewhat of pomp and glory in it, that our eyes may look right on, and we may not squint a little upon any by-motive ; or when we feel the ticklings of vain-glory.

Divines suppose that double—‘Not unto us, not unto us’—to be the rebuke of a temptation, Ps. cxv. 1. This is a re-enkindling of our purpose, when it seemeth to be quenched; as Bernard, when the devil tempted him to vain-glory, *propter te non capi, non finiam propter te*—I neither began for thee, nor will I make an end for thee. And this cometh home to the instance of the text. Paul was forced to commend himself, unless he would have the gospel trampled upon. Now to assure them it was not vain-glory, and to guard his own heart, he saith, ‘If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.’

6. Observe again, when actions are likely to be misinterpreted, and do tend to our dishonour, yet if the glory of God call for them, they should not be omitted; for we must be contented to be nothing, so God be glorified. As here it seemed to be the act of an imprudent person, or of one beside himself, to speak so largely of himself, yet it was necessary, that the false apostles might not draw them from the gospel which he had preached. And therefore Paul would run the hazard of the imputation of folly and imprudence, rather than unfaithfulness to God and their souls; thereby teaching us all to value the honour of God above our own interest, and to approve ourselves to men no farther than will stand with the approbation of God. There are some actions which our duty calleth for, which are disgusting to the world, and may seem to expose the reputation of our wisdom and reason; yet better be counted a fool and a madman for God, than one of this world’s wise men, with the neglect of our duty. Nay, there are some actions which are against the gust of the strictest professors, so that not only the reputation of our wisdom and reason, but of our conscience and integrity, is put to hazard. But he that is not contented with the glory which cometh from God only, will never be a thorough christian, John v. 44. And we must be content not only to deny our own reason and reputation for wisdom, but also our reputation for sincerity in religion, our own everything, but our own God and our own Christ.

7. Observe again from that, ‘if we be sober, it is for your cause,’ Paul’s madness, in their eye, was his asserting the credit of his ministry, his sobriety, when he spake humbly of himself. Now he was as sincere in the one as in the other. In our most sober moods, we must be sure that we glorify God, as well as when we are apt to be misjudged by the world; when we refuse praise, as well as when we own God’s gifts and graces in us. For some men will beat back honour, when it cometh to them at the first hop, that they may catch it at the rebound; and so seek that which they seem to deny; as if they held the stealth and underhand receipt of it more lawful than the purchase in the open market. No, we must be sure to be as sincere in our professions of humility, where men are least apt to suspect our pride, as there where they are most ready to charge us with it; as the apostle doth assert that he was beside himself for God, so sober for their sakes, for God’s glory and their profit.

8. The end is either ultimate or subordinate. The ultimate end is that which terminateth the action, and wherein our thoughts rest; the subordinate end is that which we aim at, but yet look further; as

here the ultimate end is God's glory, the subordinate end was their profit. So, take that other place, 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' In eating and drinking, the subordinate end is health, strength, and cheerfulness; the ultimate and supreme end, God's glory. It is a failing in our subordinate end, if we mind only carnal pleasure, and not service: Eccles. x. 7, 'Blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness.' When our meals are a meat-offering or a drink-offering to lust and appetite, it is a perversion of God's bounty. They were ordained to be a refection after business, and to repair that strength which hath been weakened in the work of our callings. But now the ultimate end is God's glory; it is not strength for our lusts, strength for our worldly ends, but for the Lord's honour; we must please appetite no farther than the pleasing of it fits us for the service to God. In many cases, nextly we may aim at some other thing beneath God, but ultimately and terminatively, all must be directed to God: as the apostle here considered them, their spiritual profit as his next aim, but, lastly and finally the glory of God.

Secondly. The reasons of the general point.

1. The interest God hath in us obligeth us to live to his glory: Rom. xiv. 8, 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: for whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's.' The apostle's reasoning is built upon this supposition, that those who are the Lord's, should live as for the Lord: but the case is so with us, we are his, and therefore must live to him. How are we the Lord's?

[1.] By creation: Prov. xvi. 4, 'God made all things for himself.' In the creation of the world, God could have no higher end than himself, than his own glory; for the end is more noble than the means; therefore when he made the world, made beasts, made man, made angels, he did all for himself. God is independent, and self-sufficient of himself and for himself. Self-seeking in the creature is absurd and unbecoming, because we depend upon another for life, and breath, and all things. Therefore to seek our own glory, contentment, and satisfaction apart from God, it is to arrogate a self-being to ourselves apart from him; we were made by God, and were not made for ourselves.

[2.] By preservation: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' As our being is from him, so our moving and doing is through him, through his providential influence and supportation; therefore all must be for him and to him. The motion of all creatures is circular; they end where they began, as the rivers return to the place from whence they came. All that issueth from God in a way of creation, and is sustained and preserved by God in a way of providence, must be to him in the tendency and final end of their motions. As we must deduce all things from God as their first cause, and continual conserving cause, so we must reduce all things to God as their last end.

[3.] By redemption. That is pleaded, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with

your bodies, and your souls, which are God's.' You are twice bound, as creatures and as redeemed; and a double obligation will infer a double condemnation, if we answer it not. The bought belong to the buyer; so we to Christ.

[4.] By dedication. We are dedicated and set apart for the Lord's use: Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' So Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Now to live to ourselves, and speak for ourselves, is practically to retract our own vows, and the dedication which we have made of ourselves to his use and service.

2. We are above all creatures fitted for his glory; as men, and as new creatures.

[1.] As men. Man above all other creatures should glorify God. Partly, because by the design of his creation he is placed nearer God as the end than other creatures are. Man is both *proxime et ultime*, nextly and lastly, for God; and so return immediately to the fountain of our being. There is nothing intervening between God and us, towards which our use and service should be directed. Other creatures, though they were made ultimately and terminatively for God, yet immediately for man; lastly for God, nextly for us; so that man standeth in the middle between God and all other creatures, to receive the benefit of them, that God may have the glory. Oh, then, how much is man, as man, obliged to glorify God, for whom this inferior world was made! All things are subjected to our dominion, or created for our use; not only fowls, and fishes, and beasts of the field, to be enjoyed by him, but sun, moon, stars, rain, weather, and all the seasons of the year: Ps. viii. 3-6, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory, and honour; thou hast made him to have dominion over the work of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.' When we look up and behold those glorious creatures, the out-work and visible parts of heaven, which display their radiant beauties to our wonder and astonishment; and withal consider how much they serve for our comfort and use, and with them the sovereign power wherewith thou didst invest man over all sublunary and inferior creatures, beasts, fowls, fishes, plants, we cannot sufficiently admire that this vile clod of earth, man, should be so much in the eye of God, to take care of him above the whole creation. The sun doth not shine, nor winds blow, nor rain fall at our pleasure, but it is for our use. Heaven is for us, the airy heaven to give us breath and motion, the starry heaven to give us heat, light, and influence, the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens, to be our dwelling-place; so that man is strangely stupid and oblivious, if he should forget the God by whose bounty he enjoys all these things. And partly, because man is more fitted, as being furnished with higher capacities; 'he teacheth us more than the beasts of the field.' We

have faculties suited to this purpose ; we have an understanding that we may know him. Surely such an understanding nature, such an immortal soul, was never made for corruptible things. God was pleased to stamp man with the character of his own image ; he beareth his superscription ; ‘Now give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.’ We may find out his track and foot-print in the creatures, but man had his image. Other creatures glorify God necessarily,—we voluntarily and by choice ; they know not the first cause, but are over-ruled by the government of providence, but we have, or should have, an understanding to know him, and an heart to love him ; therefore the duty properly belongeth to us. Other creatures glorify God passively, we actively ; they are the harp, man makes the music, Ps. cxlv. 18, ‘All thy works praise thee, thy saints bless thee.’ Man is the mouth of the creatures ; the creatures by us glorify God.

[2.] As new creatures. The people of God are most bound of all men to seek the glory of God ; you are ‘created again in Christ Jesus,’ Eph. ii. 10. It concerns you to ask, Why am I made ? to what use and purpose do I serve, but to glorify God, and admire his grace, and to live answerable to his love, and in a thankful obedience to his precepts, and to promote his kingdom and interest in this world ? By regeneration we have new faculties and dispositions. The great effect of grace is to beget a tendency towards God, to restore and incline the heart of man to his proper end. To know the end distinguisheth a man from a beast, but to choose the end, and seek the end, distinguisheth one man from another ; to make God’s glory the chief scope and end of all our lives and actions is the great fruit and effect of grace. Naturally we are either ignorant or mindless of our great end, and the way that leadeth to it : ‘All of us are gone astray like lost sheep,’ Isa. liii. 6 ; and Ps. xiv. 2, ‘They are all gone out of the way ;’ or that path which will lead us to the end for which we were created. And naturally we spend our time in serving our lusts, and are taken up with other business, have no heart or leisure to live unto God and for God, but employ our souls only to please our bodies, and to serve and please the senses, and are slaves to all the creatures, who by original institution were put under man’s feet. But now ‘Christ died to bring us to God,’ 1 Peter iii. 18, and by his Spirit doth change the heart, that we may be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 13, not only as passive objects, but as active instruments. Indeed there is objectively a greater impression of God upon the new creature, than there is upon anything else, which hath passed God’s hand. This work sets forth more of his attributes, of his goodness, wisdom, and power, than all things else. The very being of the new creature sets forth more of the praise of God to all beholders ; though the man himself were silent, yet the work would speak for itself. But we are not speaking of that now, how the new creature objectively and passively sets forth the praise of God, but how as active instruments they should glorify God both in word and deed ; not only as the praise of his glory is to be manifested in them, but as it is to be manifested and intended by them, having renewed faculties to enable them how they should live unto God and bring forth fruit unto God. Yea,

besides the renewing of their natures, they have the actual influences of his grace ; and therefore since they have all from God, they should use all for him, and live to the glory of God, whose grace enableth them to do everything. It is by the grace of God they are what they are, and therefore it is for the glory of God that they do what they do : ‘ All the fruits of righteousness wrought in them, are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God,’ Phil. i. 11. God’s glory, and not any by-respect, must be the main scope and end of the new creature ; otherwise he perverts the influences of grace, and would serve himself of the supply of the Spirit.

[3.] We by the providence of God are disposed in all our relations for this end, that we might have some sphere wherein to glorify God ; some as magistrates, some as ministers, some as masters, some as servants ; so that the glorifying of God concerneth every man in all that he doth, in all that relation wherein God hath placed him. Every man is sent into the world for some end ; for no wise agent worketh at random. God hath made nothing in vain, but hath assigned to every creature its own use and operation. To do a thing to no purpose will not agree with the wisdom of a considering man. Therefore God, who is a God of judgment, hath certainly in every work of his some scope and end ; therefore every man hath his service and employment ; if he were made for nothing, then hath he nothing to do in the world. Surely life and reason was given us for something, not merely to furnish and fill up the number of things in the world, as stones and rubbish do ; nor merely to grow in stature, as life was given to the plants to grow bulky or increase in length and breadth ; nor merely to taste sensitive pleasures, as that is the happiness of the beasts, to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those higher faculties of reason and conscience, to manage some profitable work and business for the glory of his creator, and his own eternal happiness ; and by some honest labour and vocation, as instruments of God’s providence, to serve their generation, Acts xiii. 26. The world was never made to be a hive for drones and idle ones ; if any man might be allowed to be idle and serve for no use, then God would make one rational creature in vain ; and one member would be useless in the body politic. We see in the body natural, there is no member but hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole ; all have not the same office ; that would make confusion ; but all have their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, or as a sinew, or as a vein, or as an artery. So in human society, no member may be useless ; they must have one function or another wherein to employ themselves, otherwise they are unprofitable burdens of the earth. Every man more or less hath some relation, which he is to improve for the glory of God and the good of others. Every one hath his talent, which must not be hid in a napkin ; he is accountable to God for that state of life wherein God hath set him. The Mediator hath his work, and he giveth up his account to God : John xvii. 4, ‘ I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.’ The courtier hath his work : Neh. i. 11, ‘ The Lord show me favour in the sight of this man ; for I was the king’s cupbearer ;’—he useth this as an argument, that he had improved his place for God. The minister hath his work :

2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us ;' and Heb. xiii. 17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.' The master and parent his work, and he is to glorify God as a master and parent ; the parent is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. iv. 6 ; the master hath a master in heaven, Eph. vi. 9. The servant his work, Titus ii. 10. It was well said of Epictetus the heathen, If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale ; or if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark ; but now I am a man, I will glorify God as a man, and praise him without ceasing. If a poor man, I will glorify him by my patient, innocent contentedness and humble submission ; if rich, by liberality and public usefulness ; when well, I will glorify God by my health, being hard at work for him ; when sick, by meekness and patience ; if a magistrate, by my zeal and activity ; if a minister, by diligence and faithfulness : if a tradesman, by my righteous and conscientious dealing. So that from Christ to the meanest christian, from the king to the meanest scullion, all should be at work for God ; for every man is sent into the world for some cause, and born for some end or other, to act that part upon the stage of the world which the great master of the scenes appointeth.

[4.] All our sufficiencies, gifts and abilities were given us for this end. Every man hath some gift, more or less, as well as some relation, as Mat. xxv., every man received his talent ; and he that had but one talent, was to give an account of it. Now all these must be improved for God. As the husbandman, when he scattereth his seed on the earth, looketh for a crop and increase ; so when God scattered his gifts, it was not to dispossess himself, but that they might be used for his glory. Every gift and grace received is not barely *donum*, a gift, but *talentum*, a talent. We are stewards, and not owners ; not to act for ourselves, but to honour our master. Therefore what honour and glory hath God by our gifts and graces ? God hath *dominium*, we have but *dispensationem*. It is ours for use, but not ours for enjoyment ; as a factor entrusted with his master's goods ; at length it will be seen how we have improved them.

[5.] The end much varieith the nature of the action. It maketh an act to be of another kind ; an indifferent action by the end may become a duty ; a meal is an act of worship ; alms, a sacrifice, Heb. xiii. 18 ; trading for God an act of religion, as well as prayer. On the other side, a duty by the end may become a sin ; as prayer is howling, Hosea vii. 14, when it hath only a natural or a carnal end ; fasting, the bending of a bulrush, Isa. lviii. 5 ; obedience, murder, Hosea i. 4. Jehu did not the Lord's work sincerely, but for his own base ends and interests. He was anointed at God's command to execute judgment on Ahab's house, 2 Kings ix. 6, 7, and was temporally rewarded for it, 2 Kings x. 30 ; his children to the fourth generation should sit on the throne of Israel ; yet 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Why ? Because he did it only to get a kingdom to himself ; and though he executed God's quarrel on Ahab and his house, yet he clave to the idolatry of

Jeroboam for securing his interest. So reformation may be a covetous design ; *non pietate everterunt idola, sed avaritia.* Indeed an act for the matter sinful is not altered by the end : for I must not do evil that good may come thereof ; nor use the devil to serve God. But how vile is it then to make God serve with our iniquities, and use his worship as a stale to our own ends !

SERMON XXII.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.—2 COR. v. 13.

USE is to press you to make this your great aim, to glorify God. You must take care, not only negatively, that God be not dishonoured, but positively, that he be honoured and glorified by you, and that in all states and conditions, and also in all businesses and employments. Some have wholly deviated from their great end, and are not yet come to themselves ; and live unprofitably in the world, and do nothing but eat, and drink, and play, and sleep ; they live to themselves, and to their own ease and carnal delights. Alas ! what are these men good for ? To what end have they reason and conscience ? Some things, if they be not good for one thing, yet are good for another ; but a man, if he doth not know God, and love God, and delight in God, and seek the glory of God, is like the wood of the vine, Ezek. xv. 2-4, good for nothing ; not so much as to make a pin whereon to hang anything ; good for nothing but to be cast into the fire, and to reflect upon the glory of his justice, to be fuel for the Lord's indignation. Another sort are those who are convinced they should live to God, and do now and then look after him, but are not so overcome by grace, as that this should be the overruling principle in their hearts. The last end is *principium universalissimum* ; it should have an universal influence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our desires, purposes, actions, enjoyments, relations. God's glory should be at the utmost end of every business ; nothing is good that is not directed to the last end ; it is done to the flesh, and not to God. It is impertinent to our great scope. First, In all our desires, if we desire increase and estate, it is to honour God with it, James iv. 3. Agur measures every estate by ends of religion, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Nay, spiritual things must be desired, in order to God's glory, Eph. i. 6. We must not please ourselves merely, in the consideration of our own happiness and personal benefit, but as God's glory is promoted by it. Secondly, Our purposes. Dependence is the proper notion of a created being ; man hath God for *principium et finem*. It is no more lawful for a man to abstain from respecting or seeking his end than it is possible not to depend on his principle. The creature is from another, and for another. Man is for God's glory, and for no other end ; as he is from God's power,

and no other cause ; and therefore in whatever we deliberately purpose and resolve upon, the glory of God must have the casting voice : 2 Cor. i. 17, ‘The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh ?’ that is, am I swayed by carnal motives ? A christian should not lightly and rashly resolve upon any course, but consider how it may conduce to the glory of God. Thirdly, Our actions civil and sacred, all the pots in Jerusalem, must have God’s impress, Holiness to the Lord, as well as the utensils of the temple, Zech. xiv. 21. In a king’s house there are many officers, but all to serve the king ; so in a christian’s there are many duties, of several kinds, but all must have an aspect upon, and a tendency to, the glory of God ; I must mind it in the closet, mind it in the shop, mind it in the family. Fourthly ,For enjoyments : I must value them more or less, as they conduce to the glory of God. In every thing I must ask, What doth it? Eccles. ii. 2. How doth it contribute to my great end ? The delight in an estate is not in the possession but use, for that hath a nearer connection with the glory of God ; the delight in an ordinance, as it giveth out more of God, enableth me more to honour him ; the delight in graces, as they incline me to God ; in Jesus Christ, as he bringeth me to him, and fits me for him. Now these things being so, I must rouse up both these, more to regard the glory of God, that it may influence and govern their actions. Consider these motives :—

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you, for he is resolved not to be a loser by the creation of man ; for, ‘he made man for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil,’ Prov. xvi. 4 ; and Levit. x. 3, ‘And before all the people I will be glorified.’ God will have his glory, that is certain ; he will have the glory of his justice in the day of wrath and evil, if not the glory of his grace and holiness in the day of his patience and mercy : therefore he will be glorified by you, or upon you. Some give him glory in an active, some in a passive way ; if he have not the glory due to his command, he will right himself in the course of his providence. How sad that will be, judge you. For then we shall serve for no other use, but to set forth the glory of his vindictive justice.

2. He taketh notice of it, and is well pleased with it, when we glorify him here in the world. It is one of Christ’s pleas for his disciples, John xvii. 10, ‘Father, I am glorified in them.’ He is an advocate in heaven for those who are factors for his kingdom here upon earth ; which is a comfort to all those who sincerely set themselves to promote the glory of God, and the good of the church. The more our endeavours are to glorify God and Christ, the more confident we may be of Christ’s mediation, that he is negotiating our cause in heaven.

3. We shall be called to an account, what we have done with our time and talents, and interests, and opportunities : Luke xix. 23, he will ‘require his own with usury ;’ what honour he hath by our gifts and graces, estate or esteem, relations and services ; how glorified, as magistrates, ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants. Beasts are liable to no account, because they have no reason and conscience ; they are ruled by a rod of iron, to glorify God in their kind passively. We are left to our own choice ; therefore we should mind

it seriously. If you do not ask yourselves why you came into the world, what will you answer at your appearance before God's tribunal? Job xxxi. 10, 'When he shall rise up, what shall I answer him?' I beseech you consider what you will say, when the master returneth, and taketh an account of your dispensation; you were sent into the world for this business, to serve the Lord. What will you say, when you cannot shift and lie? Will this be an answer, I spent my time in serving my own lusts; I was drowned in worldly cares, never thought of pleasing God, or glorifying God? As if an ambassador that is sent abroad to serve his king and country should only return this account of his negotiation—I was busied in courtships, and cards and dice, and could not mind the employment you sent me about. Or as if a factor that is sent to a mart or fair, should stay guzzling in an inn, or ale-house, and there spend all his money, which was to be employed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful account will poor souls make, that have spent their time either in doing nothing, or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse than nothing, that will undo them for ever!

4. How comfortable it will be at death, when you have minded your business, and seriously made it your work to live to God; and can say as our Lord, John xvii. 4, 'Father, I have glorified thee upon earth; I have finished the work thou hast given me to do.' Oh! the comfort of a well-spent life to a dying christian: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing;' or as Hezekiah, Isaiah xxxviii. 3, 'Remember, Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.' I have been careful for matter, manner and end, to glorify God by a constant obedience to his holy will. Now, on the other side, what thoughts will you have of a careless and mis-spent life, when you come to die? Many beguile themselves, and do not think of the end of their lives, till their life comes to be ended, and then they howl and make their moan; usually when they lie a-dying, they cry out of this world, how it hath deceived them, and how little they have fulfilled the ends of their creation. Partly, because their conscience puts off all disguises, and partly because present things are apt to work upon us; and when the everlasting estate is at hand, the soul is troubled that it did no more think of it before. Oh, it is better to be prepared than to be surprised. Think of your last end betimes. It is lamentable to begin to learn to live when we must die. These end their life before they begin to live. You are in your health and strength now, but we are all hastening apace into the other world. But when God summoneth by sickness, and you are immediately to appear before God, what have you to say for yourselves? The devil will then be busy to tempt and trouble us, and all other comforts fail, and have spent their allowance, and are as unsavoury as the white of an egg. Will this comfort you, that you have sported and gamed away your precious time? That you have fared of the best, and lived in pomp and honour? Ah, no; but this will be a cordial to your hearts, that you have made conscience of honouring and

glorifying God, and have been faithful in your place in promoting the church's good. Therefore if hitherto you have been pleasing the flesh, idling and wantoning away your precious time, say, 'The time past is more than enough,' 1 Peter iv. 3; I have long, too long, walked contrary to my great end, been dishonouring God, and destroying mine own soul; it is high time to remember and seek after God.

5. Consider what a full reward abideth for those that live unto God, and in all things regard his glory: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Those that honour me, I will honour;' and John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' In the issue you will find that self-denial is the truest self-seeking; that those who are contented to be anything for the Lord's glory, need not seek another pay-master. God will glorify you, if you glorify him. God's glorifying is effective and creative; ours is but declarative; he calleth the things that are not as though they were. We do no more than call things to be what they are, and far below what they are; we declare God to be what he is; we are but a kind of witnesses to God's glory; but he is an efficient in our glory; he bestoweth upon us what was not before; and the glory he bestoweth upon us answereth the greatness of his being: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' He will at length act like himself, as an infinite and eternal power. His gift shall answer his nature, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

6. Gratitude bindeth us continually to live unto God. Every moment God is at work for us, and therefore every moment we should be at work for God: John v. 17, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' In everything we should be mindful of him; you are upheld by him every moment, and have life and breath, and all things from him.

7. Our great end must fix our minds, which otherwise will be tossed up and down in several and various uncertainties, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it cannot continue in any composed and settled frame: Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart;' and James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' An uncertain mind breedeth an uncertain life; not one part of our lives will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit by the power of their last end running through them. Most men's lives are but a mere lottery, because they never minded in good earnest why they came into the world. The fancies they are governed by are jumbled together by chance; if right, it is but a good hit, a casual thing; they live at peradventure, and then no wonder they walk at random.

Means. 1. Rouse up thyself, and consider often the end for which you were created, and sent into the world. Our Lord saith, John xviii. 37, 'For this cause was I born, and for this end sent into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.' So should every one consider for what errand God sent him into the world. If these self-communings were more rife, they would do us a great deal of good. Why do I live here? What have I done in pursuance of my great end? Most men live as beasts, eat and drink, and trade and die; and there is all that can be said of them. Little have they served God, or done good

in their generation. Certainly you were not made to serve yourselves, nor any other creatures, but that other creatures might serve you, and ye serve God. Will ye once sit down in good earnest about this business, and mind the work for which ye were born? Many never asked yet in good earnest for what purpose they came into the world; and then no wonder they wander and walk at random, since they have not as yet proposed any certain scope and aim to themselves. All that we have to know is, what is our end, and the right way to obtain it; and all that we have to do is to seek the end, by those means. Now we should often consider, whether we do so yea, or no; for comparing our ways with our rule, is the way to awake and come to wisdom: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' I labour, I take pains, I rise early, I go to bed late, but to what end is all this? What is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all these things? Oh, consider seriously and frequently, for whom are you at work, for whom are you speaking and spending your time? For whom do you use your bodies, your souls, your time, your estate, your labours, and cares? Oh, my soul what is thy end in all these things?

2. Remember thou art not thine own to dispose of. The sense of God's interest in us should be often renewed upon our hearts, 1 Cor. vi. 19. 'Ye are not your own; therefore glorify God.' He hath a full right in all that we have and do: Rom. xiv. 8, 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' He hath *jus possidendi, disponendi et utendi*—a power to possess, dispose, and use the creature at his own pleasure. And if they alienate themselves from him, or use themselves to any other purpose than for his service and glory, they do as much as in them lieth to dispossess him of his right; there is nothing doth so strongly bind us, absolutely to resign ourselves to the will, use and service of our creator, as his right and interest in us. It is meet that God should be served with his own. Every man expecteth to receive the fruit of his vineyard, the improvement of his own money and goods. We think we speak reasonably, when we say we demand but our own. All the disorder of the creature proceedeth from the denial, or forgetfulness, of God's propriety in us: Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us?' Therefore if we would live unto God, we must often think of it, and revive it upon our souls, that we may not dispose of ourselves, or anything that is ours, but for the glory of God, and prefer his interest before our own.

3. Consider how much we are bound in gratitude to devote ourselves to God's use and service, for the great mercies of creation, redemption and daily providence. Certainly if we have a due sense of the Lord's goodness to us, we will devote the whole man, our whole time and strength, to his service, will, and honour; the glorifying of God is the fruit of love. The context sheweth that love is but the reflex of God's love, or the beating back of his beam upon himself. Because he hath loved us, we love him; and because we love him, we live to him, and seek his glory and honour. It is gratitude keepeth this resolution afoot, of being and doing all things for God; he showed love to us in creation, when we started out of nothing into the life and being of man. But he showed more love to us in redemption, when his own Son came to die

for us ; and that is the greater engagement to bind us to live unto God. And so it is pressed everywhere in the scripture. But yet God reneweth his mercies to us every day, that the variety and freshness of them, producing new delight, may revive the feelings of his love and goodness, and excite us to renewed zeal for his glory and delight in his service, and to employ our time and strength to his glory, with a thankful heart. In short, creation bindeth us ; for to whom should we live but to him from whom and by whom we live ? Having all from God, we should in gratitude bring back all to him. Redemption bindeth us, for we are purchased to God, not to ourselves ; and God carried it on, in such an astonishing way, the more to oblige us that we might readily and freely yield up ourselves to live to him ; daily mercies bind us to sweeten our service, God being so good a master.

4. The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind God's glory. It is more easy to convince us of our obligations to live unto God, than to get a heart and a disposition to live to God. The new creature, which is created after God, ever bendeth and tendeth towards him. As the flower of the sun doth follow the sun, and openeth and shutteth according to the absence of the sun ; so doth the heart of a christian move after God. We say, *Aqua in tantum ascendit, &c.*; nature¹ riseth no higher than its spring, head and centre ; self is our principle and end : Hosea x. 1, ' Israel is an empty vine ; he bringeth forth fruit to himself.' We live to ourselves, and seek after our own interests, till God give us another heart ; when the heart is changed, a man's felicity and last end is changed. And therein the new nature doth most bewray itself.

5. The more our lusts are mortified, the more sincerely shall we aim at the glory of God. That which is lame is easily turned out of the way. And if we have not a command over our affections, they will be interposing and perverting all our actions ; and when God should be at the end of all our actions, the idol that our lust hath set up will be at the end of them. We will subordinate them to our pleasure, honour, and profit. Any lust is a great engrosser ; the belly will be God, and honour command us as a God, and mammon will be God ; our hearts are corrupted, and some created thing is set up instead of God. Therefore mortification is the guard of sincerity ; otherwise we shall love the creature for itself alone, or for ourselves alone, and so be turned from God, whom alone we should honour, please and obey.

Use 2. Is this the temper and disposition of our souls ?—do we make the glory of God our great end and scope ? If it be so, then—

1. We will prefer God's honour above our own interests, though never so dear to us. A notable instance we have in our Lord Jesus Christ, who came as God's servant in the work of redemption ; and we read of him in the general, Rom. xv. 3, ' That he pleased not himself,' that is, he did not gratify his own natural and human will. More particularly, Phil. ii. 6–8, ' That he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself to the death of the cross.' To promote his Father's glory he willingly submitted to all manner of indignities ; for this end and purpose more expressly we have the workings of his heart set forth, John. xii. 27, 28, ' Father,

¹ Qu. 'water' ?—ED.

save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' His desires of his own safety were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty, and he preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own ease; for Christ endeth all debates with this, 'Father, glorify thy name.' Now certainly all that have the spirit of Christ will be tender of God's glory, and account that dearer to them than anything else, and submit to the bitter cup, so God may have honour thereby. You will think Christ's example too high, who submitted the sensible consolations of the godhead to the respects of God's glory; and this is not possibly practicable by any creature. It is true every ordinary christian doth not come to this height, but the thing is imitable; witness Paul, who valued the glory of God above that personal contentment and happiness that should come to him by his own salvation: Rom. ix. 3, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' It is not a hasty speech; he calleth God to witness that this was the real disposition of his heart; he speaketh advisedly and with good deliberation. But how then can it be made good? There is a holy part and a happy part in religion; he did not wish less love to Christ, nor to be less beloved of him. But you will say, A regular love beginneth at home. True, but it is not his salvation and their salvation that cometh in competition, but his salvation and the glory of God; and he was much more affected with God's glory than his own good. This should shame us that stand upon our petty interests. We are not called to such self-denial. Surely we should be contented to do anything, and be anything, so God may be glorified; poor or rich, so God may be glorified by our poverty or riches; as travellers take the way as they find it, so it will lead to their journey's end. Decline no service nor suffering for God's sake when he calleth us to it: Phil. i. 20, 'So also now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death'; so Christ be glorified in his body. That is a lower and more moderate interest, the suspension and delay of salvation, laying it at God's feet; the glorifying of God in his calling was more welcome than his present entrance into glory. So Acts xx. 24, 'I count not my life dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy.' When they told him of dangers, he went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. Well then, a heart that is truly affected with God's glory standeth upon no temporal interests and concernments, and preferreth God's honour before its own ease, honour, pleasure, esteem, yea, life itself.

2. If tender of receiving honour from men, to God's wrong. The apostles did not set up a trade for themselves: Acts xiv. 15, 'They rent their clothes, and said, What do ye do? we are but men of like passions.' So Acts iii. 12, 'Why gaze ye upon us, as if by our power and holiness we had made this man to walk.' Herod received applauses, and was therefore blasted, Acts xii. The concealer is as bad as the stealer; to affect or admit divine honour, or too much attributing to ourselves any good effected by us, as instruments, as we must not assume, so we must not receive honour when it is ascribed to us by others. The apostles would not suffer the admiration and

praise of the people to rest upon themselves : ‘ Thy pound hath gained ten pounds,’ Mat. xxv. ; and, 1 Cor. xv. 10, ‘ Not I, but the grace of God that was with me ; ’ ‘ And I live, but not I,’ Gal. ii. 20.

3. If affected deeply with God’s dishonour, though done by others : Ps. lxix. 9, ‘ The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that have reproached thee have fallen upon me.’ Vehement passions waste the body, affected more with God’s dishonour than our own personal injuries. On the other side, when we rejoice in his glory, though we ourselves be lessened : Phil. i. 18, ‘ Whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice ; ’ John iii. 30, ‘ He must increase, but I must decrease.’

4. If it be the principal design that your souls travail with, and you are still contriving how you may improve your relations, capacities and particular advantages, for God’s honour and glory, Neh. i. 11. What a man loveth, he will strive to promote it. If a man love the flesh, he will strive to please it, Rom. viii. If a man love the Lord, he will contrive how he may honour him ; if a minister, ‘ study to show thyself a workman that needs not be ashamed ; ’ if a master of a family, he will endeavour to glorify God in his family, and will consider what he hath there to do for God.

5. If not solicitous about the opinions and censures of men, 1 Cor. iv. 3. Not to stand much upon man’s day or what men think of us ; it is no great matter, my business is to approve myself to God ; the christians in the spirit were discerned from the christians in the letter : Rom. ii. 29, ‘ Whose praise is not of men, but God.’ Sincerity is much known by considering whom we make our witness, judge, approver and pay-master ; and the truest magnanimity is a living above opinions, and slighting what men think and say of us, so we be found in the way of righteousness and in the discharge of our duty ; it is more easy to deny wealth and pleasure, than it is to deny esteem and reputation.

6. When this is the great motive to all honest walking. For our end is known by our motives ; and the only way and means to glorify God is by an uniform and constant holiness : Mat. v. 16, ‘ Let your light so shine,’ &c. ; 1 Peter i. 2 ; 2 Thes. i. 12. Not seeking any glory to ourselves from men, but honestly aiming at the glory of God, will bring sufficient encouragement. So John xv. 8, ‘ Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.’ When we seek our father’s glory in all that we do, it is argument enough.

7. If we rejoice that God be glorified by others, and to the utmost of our power endeavour that it may be so. True grace is cumulative : Luke xxii. 32, ‘ When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ As fire turneth all into fire about it, so grace will diffuse itself. It is observed of mules and creatures of a mongrel race, that they never procreate and bring forth after their kind. There is an enmity goeth along with a carnal profession ; they would fain impale the common salvation, appropriate Christ to themselves, shine alone in the reputation of holiness ; but hearts zealously affected with the glory of God can delight in the gifts and graces of others, and in their actings for God, as they could do in their own : ‘ Would to God all the Lord’s people were prophets,’ Num. xi. 29. It is a sign we mind the

end more than the instruments. Self-love and self-seeking is much bewrayed by envy; if at work for God, we should be glad of company. It is a sign God's glory is our aim, when we can rejoice that others are equal or superior to us. When a man would fain have a work despatched, he would be glad of fellow-labourers.

SERMON XXIII.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 Cor. v. 14.

IN the context the apostle is rendering the reason of his fidelity in the ministry, which exposed him to hard labour, and sundry calamities. His three grand inducements were—First, the hope of a blessed immortality; secondly, the terror of the judgment; thirdly, the love of Christ. This threefold cord is not easily broken. His hopes are professed in the beginning of the chapter; his sense of the terror of the Lord, and the weightiness of his account, vers. 10, 11. With an answer to objections, thou art proud, mad, or transported, ver. 13. Now the last from his end and principle, which bringeth in the third inducement, the love of God. All together is enough to set the most rusty wheels a-going; motives strong enough to move the hardest heart. Here are the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest terrors to affright, yet all will not work without the force of love. Rewards allure and encourage; terrors keep aweful and serious, but it is love that must inwardly incline men and constrain the heart, *For the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.*

In the words we have—

1. The force and operation of love.
2. The reason why, and how it cometh to have such a force, and operation: *Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead.* The reason of our love to Christ, is Christ's love to us; which is described—

[1.] By the special act of his love; he died for us, one for all.
[2.] The end and aim of it; 'then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them,' ver. 15. Christ's end was—

(1.) Our dying to sin and worldly interests.
(2.) Our living in a dedicated and consecrated way wholly to the service and glory of Christ.

1. I begin with the force and operation of love; 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' It was love which put bands upon him, and made him forget himself, and only speak and do those things which concern the glory of Christ, and the good of the church.

Let us a little explain the words.

The love of Christ. It may be taken passively or actively; passively, for that love with which Christ loveth us; actively, for that love which we bear to Christ. I take it for this latter. Our love to Christ,

founded on his to us, ‘ constraineth us,’ *συνέχει*, compresseth the spirit with a mighty force: as Paul, *συνείχετο*, was ‘ pressed in spirit,’ Acts xviii. 5, when the spirit within him constrained him to speak. The same word expresseth that passionateness of desire which Christ had to die for us: Luke xii. 50, ‘ I have a baptism to be baptized with, *πῶς συνέχομαι*, and how am I straitened till it be? &c.,’ as a woman in travail striveth to be delivered of her burden. The word is emphatical, and noteth the sweet violence and force of love, by which the heart is overswayed and overpowered, that it cannot say nay. Beza glosseth, *totos nos possidet et regit*. It doth wholly possess us, and ruleth us, and hath us in its power, to make us do what it would have us. Paul was wholly guided and ruled by love, that he forgot himself for Christ’s sake.

Doct. That the love of Christ hath such a great force and efficacy upon the soul, that it inclineth us to a willing performance of duties of the greatest difficulty and danger.

To evidence this to you, this scripture sufficeth; for this is the account which Paul giveth of his zeal and diligence in his apostleship. To preach the gospel was a work of much labour and hazard; they went abroad to bait the devil and hunt him out of his territories; they contended not only with the corruptions and lusts, but the prejudices of men. The gospel was then a novel doctrine, advancing itself against the bent of corrupt nature, and the false religion then received in the world. If they had met with a ready compliance, there was labour enough in it, to run up and down, and compass sea and land, to invite men into the kingdom of God; but the world was their enemy. The gods of the nations had the countenance and assistance of worldly powers, and everywhere they kicked against the pricks; yet Paul was as earnest in it, as if it were a pleasing and gainful employment. If you ask, What was the reason the love of Christ constrained him?

In the managing of this point I shall inquire,—

1. What love to Christ is.
2. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.
3. Whence it cometh to have such a force upon us.

First, What is love to Christ? I shall consider the peculiar reference of it to this place.

I must distinguish of the love of God.

1. There is a love of God largely taken for all the duty of the upper hemisphere in religion, or of the first table, or where Christ divides the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour, Mat. xxii. 37-39. So it is confounded with, or compounded of, faith and repentance and new obedience; for all religion is in effect but love acted. Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ; repentance is mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved; obedience is but pleasing love; hope an earnest waiting for the full and final fruition of God, whom we love.

2. Strictly, it is taken for our complacency and delight in God. Divines distinguish of a twofold love; a love of benevolence and a love of complacency. The love of benevolence is the desiring of the felicity of another; the love of complacency is the well-pleasedness of

the soul in a suitable good. God loveth us both these ways; with the love of benevolence: ‘For so God loved the world,’ &c., John iii. 16; with the love of complacency, and so ‘The upright in the way are his delight.’ But we love God with but one of these, not with the love of benevolence; for he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity; therefore we cannot be said to love him with the love of benevolence, unless very improperly, when we desire his glory; but we love him with a love of complacency when the soul is well pleased in God, or delights in him, which is begun here, and perfected hereafter. This is spoken of, Ps. xxxvii. 4, ‘Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.’ And it is seen in this, when we count his favour and presence our chiefest happiness, and value an interest in him above all the world, Ps. xvi. 6, 7, and Ps. iv. 6, 7; and when we delight in other things, as they belong to God: Ps. cxix. 14, ‘I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.’

3. Love is sometimes put in scripture for that which is properly called a desiring, seeking love. Which is our great duty in this life, because now we are *in via*, in the way to home, in an estate of imperfect fruition, and therefore our love venteth itself most by desires and by an earnest seeking after God. The river is contented to flow within its banks till it come into the ocean, and there it expatiateth itself. It is described by the psalmist, Ps. lxiii. 8, ‘My soul followeth hard after thee;’ and, Isa. xxvi. 9, ‘With my soul have I desired thee in the night.’ This love we show when the mercy of God is most desired, valued and sought after, and those mercies most of all which do show us most of God himself, and do most help up our love to him, as when we desire spiritual blessings above temporal, wisdom and grace rather than wealth and honour. For spiritual wisdom is the principal thing, Prov. iv. 7; for it revealeth most of God to us, and is a less impediment in the ascending of our minds and hearts to him than wealth, or honour, or secular learning, or whatsoever subserveth the interest of the flesh. The world is full of allurements to the flesh; and since we have separated the creature from God, and love it apart from God, these temporal mercies, which should raise the mind to him, are the greatest means to keep it from him. Therefore the soul of one that loveth God, though it doth not despise the bounty of his daily providence, yet it is mainly bent after those mercies which are the distinguishing and peculiar testimonies of his favour, and do more especially direct the soul to him: ‘Set your affections on things that are above, and not on things which are on earth,’ Col. iii. 2.

4. To omit other distinctions, the love which we are upon is the love of gratitude and thankfulness. Not the general love which compriseth all religion, either in its own nature or in its means and fruits; not the particular love of delight and complacency, by which we delight in God, and all the manifestations of himself to us. Nor, thirdly, not the seeking and desiring love, by which we seek to get more of God into our hearts, and above all do desire and seek the endless enjoyment of him in glory. These work not so expressly as this love of gratitude, concerning which observe three things—

[1.] The general nature of it. It is a gracious and holy love, which

the soul returneth back to God again, upon the apprehension of his love to us. Gospel love is properly a returning love, a thankful love. Love is like a diamond that is not properly wrought upon but by its own dust. It is love that begetteth love: 1 John iv. 19, ‘We love him because he loved us first;’ as fire begets fire, or as an echo returneth what it receiveth. It is a reflection or a reverberation, or casting back, of God’s beam upon himself. As a cold wall sendeth back a reflection of heat when the sun hath shone upon it, so our cold hearts, being warmed with a sense of God’s love, return love to him again: Cant. i. 3, ‘Thy name is an ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love thee.’ When the box of spikenard is broken, and the savour of his good ointments shed abroad, then the virgins love him; hearts are attracted to him. The more God’s love to us is known and felt, the more love we have to God.

[2.] The special object of this love is God as revealed in Christ. Partly, because thereby God, who is otherwise terrible to the guilty soul, is thereby made amiable and a fit object for our love. And therefore in studying Christ, it should be our principal end to see the goodness, love, and amiableness of God in him. A condemning God is not so easily loved as a gracious and reconciled God. Man’s fall was from God unto himself, especially in the point of love; he loved himself instead of God, and therefore his real recovery must be by the bringing up his soul to the love of God again. Now a guilty condemned sinner can hardly love the God who in justice will condemn and punish him, no more than a malefactor will love his judge, who cometh to pronounce sentence upon him. Tell him that he is a grave and comely person, a just and an upright man; but the guilty wretch replieth, He is my judge. Well then, nothing can be more conducing and essential to man’s recovery to God, than that God should be represented as most amiable, a father of mercies, a God of pardons, one that is willing to pardon and save him, in and by Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’ So he is represented comfortably to us, and inviting the heart to close with him. And partly, because so we have the highest engagement to love him. We are bound to love God as a creator and as a preserver; to love him as he is the strength of our lives and the length of our days, Deut. xxx. 20; to love him, because he heareth the voice of our supplications, Ps. cxvi. 1; as our deliverer, and the horn of our salvation, Ps. xviii. 2; to love him as one who daily loadeth us with his benefits. There is a gratitude due for these mercies. But chiefly as he is our God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great instance of God’s love: Rom. v. 8, ‘God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;’ and 1 John iv. 10, ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.’ That was the astonishing expression of it, a mystery, without controversy, great, that he was pleased to save us at so dear a rate, and by so blessed and glorious a person, that we might more admire the glory of his love to sinners, so wonderfully declared unto us. God made Christ’s love so exemplary, that he might overcome us by kindness.

[3.] The singular effects of this gratitude or returning love. It

causeth us to devote the whole man to Christ's service, will, and honour, and to bring back all his mercies to him, as far as we are able, to his use and glory. God in Christ, being so great a benefactor, all that have received the benefit with a due sense and esteem of it, will resolve to love God again, and to serve him with all their powers, Rom. xii. 1. Who deserveth our love and obedience more than God? and our thankful remembrance, more than Christ? Therefore if we be affected with the mercy of our redemption, we will devote ourselves and our all to him, and use our all for him. Our whole lives will be employed for him, and all our actions will be but the effects of inward love streaming forth in thankfulness to God. So Paul here being in the bonds of love, and under lively apprehensions of this infinite love of Christ, utterly renounced himself, to dedicate himself wholly to the service of God and his church. And surely if we are thus affected, we will be like-minded, perfectly consecrating to him our life and strength.

Secondly. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.

1. Love is an ingenuous and thankful grace, that is, thinking of a recompence, or a return to God, or paying him in kind, love for love. The reasonableness of this will appear by what is done between man and man. We expect to be loved by those whom we love, if they have anything of good nature left in them. The most hard-hearted men are melted and wrought upon by kindness. Saul wept when David spared him, when he had him in his power; and shall God not only spare us, but Christ come and make a plaster of his own blood to cure us, and heal us, and shall we have no sense of the Lord's kindness? Usually we are taken more with what men suffer for us than with what they do for us, and shall Christ do and suffer such great things, and we be no way affected? See how men plead one with another. Consider the words of Jehu to Jonadab the son of Rechab: 2 Kings x. 15, 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' Dost thou in truth affect me, as I do thee? And Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. vi. 11-13, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, be ye also enlarged'—that is, my kindness and affection are great, my whole soul is open to you and at your service. It would be a just return if you would be back again as kind and affectionate towards me, as I have been to you. And again, when we are not loved by those whom we love, we use to expostulate it with them; as the same Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. xii. 15, 'I will very gladly spend myself, and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am beloved of you;' or as Joab to David: 2 Chron. xix. 6, 'Thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.' Men think they reason well when they plead thus, for they presume it of love, that it will be ingenuous, and make suitable returns. Well then, the like we may with better reason expect from all those who have a due sense of their Redeemer's love, that they will return affection for affection, and accordingly honour and serve him who died for them. God's love hath more worth and merit in it than man's. No man's love is carried on in such an astonishing way, nor with such condescension. God

had no reason to love us at so dear a rate: but we have all the reason in the world to love God and serve him. Therefore if he hath prevented us with his love, the thankful soul will think of a return and recompence, such as creatures can make to God. God's love of bounty will be requited by a love of duty on our part.

2. Love is a principle that will manifest and show itself. Of all affections it can least be concealed; it is a fire that will not be hidden. Men can concoct their malice, and hide their hatred, but they cannot hide their love. It will break out and express itself to the party loved, by the effects and testimony of due respects: Prov. xxv. 5, 'Open rebuke is better than secret love.' When a man beareth another good-will, but doth nothing for him, how shall he know that he loveth him? Can a man love God, and do nothing for him? No; it must show itself by some overt act; love suffereth a kind of imperfection till it be discovered, till it break out into its proper fruits: 1 John ii. 5, 'He that keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected; as "lust is perfected, when it bringeth forth sin," Jam. i. 15. it hath produced its consummate act, and discovered itself to the full.'

3. It bendeth and inclineth the heart to the thing loved. *Amor meus est pondus meum; eo feror, quocunque, feror.* It is the vigorous bent of the soul, and it so bendeth and inclineth the soul to the thing loved, that it is fastened to it, and cannot easily be separated from it. We are brought under the power of what we love, as the apostle speaketh of the creatures: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'But I will not be brought under the power of any.' It is deaf to counsel in its measure; it is true of our love to Christ, if we love him, we will cleave to him. A man is dispossessed of himself that hath lost the dominion of himself, as Samson, like a child led by Delilah: so is a man ruled and governed by his love to Christ.

4. It is a most kindly principle to do a thing for another out of love. What is done out of love is not done out of slavish compulsion, but good-will; not an act of necessity, but choice: 1 John v. 3, 'This is love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' That is bad ground that bringeth forth nothing, unless it be forced. Natural conscience worketh by fear, but faith by love. Love is not compelled, but it worketh of itself; sweetly, kindly, it taketh off all irksomeness, lessens difficulties, facilitates all things, and maketh them light and easy, so as we serve God cheerfully. Where love prevaleth, let it be never so difficult, it seemeth light and easy. Seven years for Rachel seemed to Jacob as nothing, made him bear the heat of the day and cold of the night, Gen. xxix. 10. But where love is wanting, all that is done seemeth too much.

5. It is a most forcible, compelling principle; *non persuadet sed cogit*, one glosseth the text so. It cometh with commanding entreaties, reasoneth in such a powerful, prevailing manner, as it will have no denial: Titus ii. 11, 12, 'For the grace of God that, bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.' Nothing will hold your hearts to your work so much as love. Lay what bands you will upon yourselves, if a temptation cometh, you will break them, as Samson did his cords, wherewith he

was bound. Promises, vows, covenants, resolutions, former experiences of comfort, when put to trial, all is as nothing to love. But now let a man's love be gained to Christ, that is band enough : *quis legem dat amantibus? major lex amor sibi est.* Love, so far as love, needeth no penalties, nor laws, nor enforcements, for it is a great law to itself, it hath within its bosom as deep obligations and engagements to anything that may please God, as you can put upon it. Indeed if there were not an opposite principle of averseness, this were enough ; but I speak of love as love. Fear and terror are a kind of external impulse, that may drive a soul to a duty ; but the inward impulse is love ; that will influence and overrule the soul, and engage it to please Christ, if it beareth any mastery there.

6. It is laborious ; it requireth great diligence to be faithful with Christ. Now love is that disposition which puts us upon labours : this, if anything, will keep a man to his work : Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love ;' and 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love.' It is not an affection that can lie bashful and idle in the soul. So Rev. ii. 4, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' Till love be lost, our first works are never left. Our Lord when he had work for Peter to do, gauged his heart, John xxi. 15, 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me ?' Love sets all a-going.

7. It dilateth and enlargeth the heart, and so it is liberal to the thing loved. 'I will praise him yet more and more ;' 'I will not serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing.' Other things will not go to the charge of obedience to God. It will be at some cost for God and Christ, and maketh us obey God against our own interest, and carnal inclination. It was against the hair, but the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter, Gen. xxxiv. 19.

8. It is an invincible and unconquerable affection : Cant. viii. 6, 7, 'Love is strong as death : jealousy is cruel as the grave ; the coals thereof are as the coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love ; neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.' There is a vehemency and an unconquerable constancy in love, against and above all afflictions, and above all worldly baits and profits. The business is, of whose love this is to be interpreted ; of Christ's, or ours. If we understand it of Christ's love, then it is really verified. Christ's love was as strong as death, for he suffered death for us, and overcame death for us ; he debased himself from the height of all glory to the depth of all misery for our sakes, Phil. ii. 7, 8, and 2 Cor. viii. 9 ; overcame all difficulties by the fervency of his love, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, on the one hand, Heb. xii. 2 ; on the other, refusing the offers of preferment : Mat. iv. 9, 10, 'The devil maketh an offer of all the world to Christ. Of ease : Mat. xvi. 22, 23, 'And Peter began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.' Of honour : Mat. xxvii. 40, 43, 'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God. He trusted in God : let him deliver him now, if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God.' But

it is also verified of christians in their measure, who love not their lives to the death, and overcome all difficulties : Acts xxi. 13, 'Willing to die at Jerusalem ;' endure all afflictions ; Ps. xliv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet we have not forsaken thee :' and suffer the loss of all worldly comforts ; Mat. xix. 27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee ;' and Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' But rather I apply it to the latter, for it is rendered as a reason, why they beg a room in his heart ; the love that presseth us is of such a vehement nature, that it cannot be resisted, no more than death, or the grave, or fire can be resisted. Nothing else but Christ can quench it, and satisfy it ; such a constraining power it hath, that the persons that have it are led captive by it. An ardent affection and love to Christ is of this nature, and when it is strong and vigorous, it will make strong and mighty impressions upon the heart ; no opposition will extinguish it. Waters will quench fire, but nothing will quench this love : Rom. viii. 37, 'Nay, in all those things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.' There are two sorts of trials that ordinarily carry away souls from Christ ; the first is from the left hand, from crosses ; these carry away some, but not all ; though the stony ground could not, yet the thorny ground could abide the heat of the sun : yet the second sort of trials, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and voluptuous living, which are the temptations of the right hand, will draw away unmortified souls and choke the word. Pleasures, honours, riches, are a more strong and subtile sort of temptations than the other ; but yet these are too weak to prevail with that heart which hath a sincere love to Christ planted in it. They will not be tempted and enticed away from Christ. If a man would give all the substance of his house, such a soul will be faithful to Christ, and these offers and treaties are in vain. If love be true and powerful, it is not easily ensnared, but rejects the allurements of the world and the flesh, with a holy disdain and indignation ; all as dung and dross that would tempt it from Christ, Phil. iii. 9. And these essays to cool it, and divert it, and draw it away, are to no purpose. Well then, this warm love to Christ is the hold and bulwark that maintaineth Christ's interest in the soul. The devil, the world, and the flesh, batter it, and hope to throw it down, but they cannot ; nothing else will serve the turn in Christ's room.

Thirdly, Whence love to Christ cometh to have such a force upon us ; or, which is all one, how so forcible a love is wrought in us ?

I answer, (1.) Partly by the worth of the object ; and (2.) Partly by the manner how it is considered by us and applied to us.

1. From the worth of the object. [1.] When we consider what Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what love he hath showed therein, how can we choose but love with such a constraining, unconquerable love, as to stick at no difficulty and danger for his sake ? The circumstances which do most affect our hearts are these, our condition and necessity. When he came to show this love to us, we were guilty sinners, in a lost and lapsed estate, and so altogether hopeless, unless some means were used for our recovery. Kindness to them that are

ready to perish doth most affect them. Oh, how should we love Christ, who are as men fetched up from the gates of hell, under sentence of condemnation, when we were in our blood ! Ezek. xvi. ; had sold ourselves to Satan, Isa. lvii. 3 ; cast away the mercies of our creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23. When sentenced to death, John iii. 18, and ready for execution, Eph. ii. 3, then did Christ, by a wonderful act of love, step in to rescue and recover us ; not staying till we relented, and cried for mercy, but before we were sensible of our misery, or regarded any remedy, then the Son of God came to die for us.

[2.] The astonishing way in which our deliverance was brought about by the incarnation, death, shame, blood and agonies of the Son of God who was set up in our natures, as a glass and pledge of God's great love to us : 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' We had never known so much of the love of God, had it not been for this instance. He showed love to us in creation, in that he gave us a reasonable nature, when he might have made us toads and serpents. He sheweth love to us in our daily sustentation, in that he keepeth us at his expense, though we do him so little service, and do so often offend him ; but herein was love, that the Son of God himself must hang upon a cross, and become a propitiation for our sins. We now come to learn by this instance, that God is love, 1 John iv. 8. What was Jesus Christ but love incarnate, love born of a virgin, love hanging upon a cross, laid in the grave, love made sin, love made a curse for us ?

3. The consequent benefits. I will name three, to which all the rest may be reduced.

(1.) Justification of our persons : Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God ;' and Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ;' and Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him ;' to be at present upon good terms with God and capable of communion with him, and access to him, with assurance of welcome and audience, to have all acts of hostility cease, this is to stop mischief at the fountain-head—for if God be at peace with us, of whom should we be afraid ?—then to have sin pardoned, which is the great ground of our bondage and terror, that which blasteth all our comforts, and maketh them unsavoury to us, and is the venom and sting of all our crosses and miseries, the great make-bate between God and us ; once more, to be freed from the fear of hell, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly terrible to all serious persons that are mindful of their condition, so that we may live in a holy security and peace. Oh, how should we love the Lord Jesus, who hath procured these benefits for us !

(2.) To have our natures sanctified, and healed, and freed from the stain of sin, as well as the guilt of it, and to have God's impress imprinted upon our souls, this is also consequent of the death of Jesus Christ : Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify, and cleanse it by the washing of water ;' and Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;' so that being delivered from the thraldom of sin, which is a great ease to a burdened soul, and fitted

for the service of God,—for Christ came to make a people ready for the Lord,—to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and have a nature divine and heavenly. Let diseased souls desire worldly greatness, swine take pleasure in the mire, and ravenous beasts feed on dung and carrion, an enlarged soul must have those higher blessings, and looketh upon holiness not only as a duty, but a great privilege, to be made like God, and made serviceable to him. This is that which endears their hearts to Christ, ‘He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, that we might be kings and priests unto God,’ Rev. i. 5.

(3.) Eternal life and glory : 1 John iii. 1, 2, ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed us, that we should be called the sons of God. It doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’ This is the end of all ; for this Christ died, and for this we believe, and hope, and labour, even for that happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh God, and be companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him, and delight in him ; and the soul shall for ever dwell in a glorified body, that shall be no clog, but an help to it ; and be no more troubled with infirmities, necessities, and diseases, but for ever be at rest with the Lord, lauding his name to all eternity. Now shall all this be done for us ? and shall we not love Christ ? Certainly if there be faith to believe this, there will be love ; and if there be love, there will be obedience, be it never so tedious and irksome to our natural hearts.

2. The strength of love ariseth from the manner, how it is considered by us and applied to us.

(1.) Partly, by faith ; (2.) Partly, by meditation ; and (3.) Partly, by the Spirit.

[1.] Faith. Nothing else will enkindle, and blow up this holy fire of love in our hearts, for affection followeth persuasion. Till we believe these things, we cannot be affected with them. To a carnal, natural heart, the gospel is but as a fine speculation, or a well-contrived fable, or a dream of a shower of rubies falling out of the clouds in a night ; but faith, or a firm persuasion, *that affecteth the heart, and therefore the apostle speaketh of faith working by love, Gal. v. 6.* Faith reporteth to the soul, and filleth the soul with the apprehensions of God’s love in Christ, and then maketh use of the strength and sweetness of it, to carry forth all acts of obedience to God.

[2.] By meditation. The most excellent things do not work if they be not seriously thought of. Affections are stirred up in us by the inculcation of the thoughts, as by the beating of the steel upon the flint the sparks fly out : as the apostle persuadeth to this : Eph. iii. 17, 18, ‘That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with all saints to comprehend what is the height, and depth, and length of the love of God in Christ, and may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge !’ This is the blessed employment of the saints, that they may live in the consideration and admiration of this wonderful love, that so they may ever keep themselves in the love of Christ.

Nothing excitest us to our duty so much as this; therefore we should not content ourselves with a superficial view of it, but dwell upon it in our thoughts. It is our narrow thoughts, our shallow apprehensions of God's love in Christ, our cold and unfrequent meditation of it, which maketh us so barren and unfruitful as we are.

[3.] The Spirit maketh all effectual. The gospel containeth the matter; meditation is the means to improve it; but if it be an act of the human spirit only, it affecteth us not; the thoughts raised in us by bare and dry reason are not so lively as those raised in us by faith, that puts a life into all our notions. Now the acts of faith are not so forcible as when the Spirit of God sheddeth abroad this love in our souls, Rom. v. 5. We must use the gospel, must use reason, must use faith, in meditation on the love of Christ, but we must beg the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, who giveth us a taste and feeling of this love, and most thankfully to entertain it.

Use. It sheweth us how we should excite and rouse up ourselves in every duty, especially in those that are difficult and displeasing to the flesh. The apostle Paul endured prisons, stripes, reproaches, disgraces, yea, death itself, out of the unconquerable force of love. Therefore, if you have any great thing to do for God, and would work to the purpose, let faith by the Spirit set love a-work. Faith is needful, the work of redemption being long since over, and our Lord is absent, and our rewards future; and love is necessary because difficulties are great, and oppositions many. The flesh would fain be pleased; but when faith telleth love, what great things God hath done for us in Christ, the soul is ashamed when it cannot deny a little ease, pleasure or profit.

SERMON XXIV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 Cor. v. 14.

I HAVE chosen this scripture to speak of the love of gratitude, or that thankful return of love which we make to God, because of his great love to us in Christ. Before I go on further in this discourse, I shall handle some cases of conscience.

First, About the reason and cause of our love; whether God be only to be loved for his beneficial goodness, and not also for his essential and moral perfections. The cause of doubting is this; whether true love doth not rather respect God as amiable in himself, than beneficial to us? The ancient writers in the church seemed to be of this mind. Lombard, out of Austin, defineth love to be that grace by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake.

Ans. 1. There are several degrees of love.

1. Some love Christ for what is to be had from him, and that he may be good to us; there we begin. The first invitation to the creature is the offer of pardon and life: Mat xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls ;' and Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Self-love, and the natural sense of our own misery, and the sense of our burden, and the desires of our happiness, have a marvellous influence npon us, yea, wholly govern us in our first address to God by Christ. Now this is not altogether to be blamed and condemned. Partly, because there is no other dealing with mankind. Tell a malefactor of the perfections of his judge, this will never induce him to love him. And partly, because we may and must love Christ as he hath revealed himself to our love. Now he hath revealed himself as a saviour, as a pardoner, as a rewarder, for surely we may make use of God's motives. He suffereth us to begin in the flesh, that we may end in the spirit; there is some grace in this very seeking love. You are affected with the true cause of misery, not outward necessity, but sin; you seek after the right remedy, which is in Christ, and there is some faith in that, in taking Christ at his word. The defect of this love is, that you mind your own personal benefit and safety, rather than the pleasing, obeying, and glorifying of God; so far there is weakness in this act; but this is the only way to bring in the creature; as when a prince offereth pardon to his rebels, with a promise that he will restore them to their forfeited privileges in case they will lay down their arms, and submit to his mercy. Self-interest moveth them at first, but after love and duty to their prince holdeth them within the bounds of their duty and allegiance. I will ease you, saith Christ, you shall find rest to your souls; I will be a rewarder to you, and give you eternal life. As lost creatures we take him at his word, and afterwards love him and serve him upon purer motives. Or take the similitude thus; in a treaty of marriage, the first proposals are grounded upon estate, suitableness of age, and parentage, and neighbourhood, and other conveniences of life; conjugal affection to the person groweth by society and long converse. Fire at first kindling casts forth much smoke, but afterwards it is blown up into a purer flame.

2. Some love him for the good which they have received from him. Not so much that he may be good, but because he hath been good; and indeed the love of gratitude is a true christian and gospel love, and hath a greater degree of excellency than the former, because thankfulness is the great respect of the creature to the creator, and because so few return to give God the glory of what they have received; but one of the healed lepers returned back, and glorified God, Luke xvii. 15-18. And because gratitude hath in its nature something that is more noble than self-seeking, and bare expectation; for common reason tells us that it is better to give than to receive; and in this returning love, we seek to bestow something upon God, in that way we are capable of, of doing such a thing, or God of receiving it. This returning love is often spoken of in scripture, as a praiseworthy thing: Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications;' and Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

God, which is your reasonable service.' God hath the honour of a pre-
cedency, but we of a return : 1 John iv. 16, 'Herein is love, not that
we loved God, but that he loved us.' There is the true spirit of the
gospel in such a love, for gospel obedience and service is a life of love,
and praise, and thankfulness.

3. Some love God because he is good in himself. Not only that he
may be good to us, or because he hath been good to us, but because he
is good in himself. God's essential goodness, which is the perfection of
his nature, his infinite and eternal being, and his moral goodness, which
is the perfection of his will, or his holiness and purity, is the object of
love, as well as his beneficial goodness, or that goodness of his which
promoteth our interest. I prove it, partly because God is the object of
love, though we receive no good by it. Love and goodness are as the
iron and the load-stone ; nature hath made them so. Now God, con-
sidered in his infinite perfection, is good, as distinguished from his doing
good, Ps. cxix. 68. And partly because God loveth himself first, and
the creature for himself : Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things
for himself.' The first object of the divine complacency is his own
being, and the last end of all things is his own glory and pleasure : Rev.
iv. 11, 'For thy pleasure they are, and were created.' Now this is a
reason to us, because the perfection of holiness standeth in an exact con-
formity to God, and by grace we are made partakers of a divine nature,
2 Peter i. 4 ; which mainly discovereth itself in loving as God loveth, and
hating as God hateth. And therefore we must love him in and for
himself, and ourselves for him. And partly, because if God were only
to be beloved for the effects of his benignity and beneficial goodness ;
this great absurdity would follow, that God is for the creature, and not
the creature for God ; for the supreme act of our love would terminate
in our happiness as the highest end, and God would be only regarded in
order thereunto. Now to make God a means is to degrade him from
the dignity and pre-eminence of God. Partly, because we are bound
to love the creatures as good in themselves, though not beneficial to
us ; therefore much more God, as good in himself. If we are to love
the saints as saints, not because kind and helpful to us, but because of
the image of God in them, though they never did us any good turn :
Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excel-
lent, in whom is all my delight ;' if we are to love the law of God, as
it is pure, then we are to love God, because of the moral goodness of
his nature, Ps. cxix. 140. These things are out of question clear and
beyond all controversy. Why not God then, in whom is more purity
and holiness, if indeed we are persuaded of the reality and excellency
of his being ? Now in this last rank there are degrees also.

[1.] Some love Christ above his benefits. They do not love pardon
and salvation, so much as they love Christ : 1 Peter ii. 7, 'To them
that believe Christ is precious.' To love the gifts more than the person,
the jointure more than the husband, in a temporal cause, would not
be counted a sincere love. The truth is, at first the benefits do first
lead us to seek after God. Man usually beginneth at the lowest, and
loveth God for his love to us, but he riseth higher upon acquaintance.
First he loveth God for that taste of his goodness which we have in the
creatures ; then for that goodness God exhibiteth in the ordinances,

for that help he offereth us there for our greatest necessities; then as in graces, justification and sanctification; then as in Christ, as the fountain of all; then God above Christ as mediator, as the ultimate object of love.

[2.] Possibly some may come to such a degree as to love Christ without his benefits. The height of Moses and Paul is admirable, who loved God's glory above their own salvation: Exod. xxxii. 32, 'Blot me out of thy book,' and Rom. ix. 3, 'I could even wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsfolk in the flesh;' lay all his personal benefit, or the happy part of his portion at God's feet in Christ for a greater end, to promote his glory; but this extraordinary zeal is very rare, if attained by any other in this life.

[3.] Some love the benefits for his sake; heaven the better, because Christ is there; pardon the better, because God is so much glorified in it; holiness, as it is a conformity to God; and the work, for the work's sake. Not but the other considerations tend to this, and have an influence upon this; so much obliged to Christ that everything is sweet as it cometh from him, or relateth to him.

2. Sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion bewrayeth itself in four things.

[1.] When Christ is loved for worldly advantages. We must always distinguish between our spiritual interests and our carnal. To respect Christ for our temporal advantage is that which God abhorreth, as those that followed Christ for the loaves, John vi. 28, to be fed with a miracle without labour and pains. So, *vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum*—scarce is Jesus loved for Jesus' sake. And still Christ's name is reverenced; but his office and saving grace are disregarded, and men are content with his common gifts, not seeking after his special benefits. It is no great matter to own that which is publicly esteemed, and now Christ is everywhere received, to make a general profession of being christians. Saith Gilbert,—Now the doctrine of Christ is handled in councils, disputed of in the schools, preached in assemblies, and his religion made the public profession of nations, it is no great matter of thanks to own the general belief of christianity. There are many bastard motives of closing with Christ and his ways, as fame, and ease, and carnal honour, and the sunshine of worldly countenance. These are quite another thing than when a poor soul out of the sense of his lost estate would desire Christ, and would fain part with anything to gain Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9; and a sound conviction of our misery, and a sense of his excellency, and our suitableness, maketh us to close with him. The other followed him for the loaves; indeed because his bread was buttered with worldly conveniences. By a respect to such base motives religion is prostituted to secular interests.

[2.] When we have a carnal notion of the true rewards of godliness. Carnal men look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure. When Christ had spoken of the bread that will make men live for ever: John vi. 34, they cried out, 'Evermore give us of this bread of life.' They thought no more than of an everlasting continuance in the present earthly estate. Such carnal notions have men of heaven, as of a Turkish paradise; but to know God and love God, and have the soul filled up with God, to be with Christ and to be perfected in

holiness, these things work little upon them. The heaven of christians is to enjoy an everlasting communion with God. To live in the belief and hopes of such a heaven, and to delight our souls in the forethought of the endless sight and love of God, this is a true act of sincere love to Christ, seeking its full satisfaction. Here we see him but as in a glass, there face to face. We shall behold the glory of God in heaven, and the delights of love will then be perfect. But usually men have a carnal notion of heaven, by a voluptuous life, without labour, and pain, and trouble, and this tainteth their hearts; their apprehensions of benefit by Christ are feculent, earthly, and drossy.

[3.] When our respects to benefits are disorderly, not in the frame wherein God hath set them. As, for instance, when we desire some benefits, and not others, or hate his ways and love his benefits: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous.' They love him as a redeemer, but hate him as a law-giver. A carnal man would sever the benefits from the duties; as Ephraim is as a heifer not taught, which would tread out the corn, but not break the clods, Hos. x. 11. Their threshing was by the feet of oxen shod with iron. Now the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled. But harrowing, and breaking the clods, was a mere labour, and no privilege; they would do the one, but not the other. If you love Christ's benefits, you must love them altogether; not taking one, and leaving out another; you shall not have pardon without sanctification, nor the comforts of his Spirit without his quickening and purifying influence; nor freedom from hell, without freedom from sin. Christ must guide you and rule you, dwell in you, and bless you, and justify you, and whatever he is made of God, that he must be to you, 1 Cor. i. 30. He will not give you any such grace as shall discharge you from duty, and be a kind of license and privilege to sin.

[4.] When we rest in the lowest acts of love, and do not go on to perfection. The first acts have more of self-love in them than love to God; you must go on from them to gratitude, and from gratitude to adoration, an humble adoration of the divine excellences; for the divine excellences are lovely in themselves, as well as his benefits are comfortable to us; and by an acquaintance with God in Christ, we must settle into a more entire friendship with him, and delight as much in praising him for his excellences, as we do in blessing him for his benefits. The angels and blessed spirits that are above do admire and adore God, because of the excellences of his nature; not only for the benefits they have received from him. They are represented as crying out, Isa. vi. 3, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' by admiring, and being affected with his holy nature and sovereign majesty and dominion; and are we no way concerned in this? Surely God must be lauded and served on earth as he is in heaven, and though we cannot reach to their degree, yet some kind of this respect belongeth unto us. In the Revelation the four living wights, and twenty-four elders, are brought in: Rev. iv. 8, 'Saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' Now by the four beasts, or four living wights, and the twenty-four elders, the interpreters generally understand the gospel church, who are

continually praising God for the unity of his essence, the trinity of persons, together with his eternity, omnipotency and holiness, to show we should love these things, and be affected with these things, as well as his bounty and goodness to us. Indeed a christian is like a river; when it first boileth up out of the fountain, it contenteth itself with a little hole, but afterwards it seeketh for a larger channel, but is still pent within banks and bounds; but when it emptieth itself into the ocean, it expatiateth and enlargeth itself, and is wholly mingled with the ocean.

Second case is about the actual persuasion of God's love to us. For since this love of gratitude ariseth from a sense or apprehension of God's love to us in Christ; therefore God's children are troubled when they cannot make particular application, as Paul, and say, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20.

Ans. 1. A particular persuasion of God's love to us is very comfortable. Things that do most concern us do most affect us; as a man is more pleased with legacies bequeathed to him by name, than left indefinitely to those who can make friends. If I can discern my name in God's testament, it is unquestionably more satisfactory and more engaging than when with much ado I must make out my title, and enter myself an heir: Eph. i. 13, 'After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation in general, or to others only, but every one should labour, by a due application of the promises of the gospel unto themselves, to find it a doctrine of salvation unto themselves. Salvation by Christ is a benefit which we need as much as others, and therefore should give all diligence to understand our part and interest in it. God's love to us is the great reason of our love to God; ours a reflection; the more direct the beam, the stronger the reflection. It is the quickening motive to the spiritual life, Gal. ii. 20. Certainly they are much to blame who can so contentedly sit down with the want thereof, so they may be well in the world; if God will love them with a common love, so as they may live in peace, and credit, and mirth, and wealth among men. Our joy, comfort, and peace, much dependeth on the sense of our particular interest: Luke i. 46, 'My soul doth rejoice in God my saviour;' and Rom. v. 11, 'We rejoice in God, as those that have received the atonement.' It is uncomfortable to live in doubts and fears, or else to live by guess and uncertain conjectures. Well then, if we would maintain the joy of faith, the vigour of holiness, we should get our interest more clear.

2. It is not absolutely necessary; because love is the fruit of faith, not of assurance only: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith working by love.' Love is not so grown indeed where there are fears and doubts of our condition: 1 John iv. 18, 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love;' yet a love he hath to God. If love did wholly depend upon an actual persuasion of God's special love to us, it could never be rooted and grounded, for this actual persuasion is an uncertain thing, often interrupted by the failings of God's children, and spiritual desertions, and frequent temptations. We do not sail to heaven with a like tide of comforts. Our evidences are many times dark, doubtful, and

litigious, but the grounds of faith are always clear, fixed, and stable; and therefore the serious christian may make a shift to love Christ, though he doth not know that he loveth him with a special love, so as to be absolutely assured of it; he is not so necessarily a comforter, as a sanctifier. And though he doth not fill us with joy, yet he may work a strong and earnest love in our hearts, which is as much seen in unutterable groans as in unspeakable joys. Love is one of our greatest evidences, and therefore goeth before assurance, rather than followeth after it: and assurance is rather the fruit of love, than love of assurance: see John xiv. 21-23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' It is because we love God so little that we want the fruits of his manifested love. So that you must not cease to love God, before you are assured of his love to you; but you must love him sincerely and strongly, and then you will know God loveth you. In the love of benevolence, God beginneth; but as to complacency, the object must be qualified. We must have a good measure of grace before we can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it.

3. There are many considerations which are proper to our state. Every one of us have cause enough to love God, if we have but hearts to love him, not only as he created us out of nothing, but as he redeemed us by Christ. Cannot I bless God for Christ, without reflection on my own particular benefit; his general love in sending a saviour for mankind? John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:' as they reasoned, Luke vii. 5, 'He loved our nation, and hath built us a synagogue;' few did enjoy the benefit of it, but it was love to the nation of the Jews. So his philanthropy, his man-kindness, should put that home upon us, that there is a sufficient foundation for the truth of this proposition, that whosoever believeth shall be saved; that Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, to deliver me from wrath, and to bring me to everlasting life; that such a doctrine is published in our borders, wherein God declareth his pleasure, that he is willing all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 3; that the door is wide enough, if you will get in; and if you have no interest, you may have an interest, We must not think that general grace is no grace. The life of christianity lieth in the consideration of these things. In the free offers of grace all have a like favour; and none have cause to murmur, but all to give thanks. All that God looketh for is a thankful acceptance of the grace made for us in Christ. Surely when we think of God's goodness and kind-heartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, and do often and seriously think what he is in himself, and what he is to you, what he hath done for you, and what he will more do for you, if you will but consent, and accept of his grace, such serious thoughts cannot but warm your hearts, and through the Lord's blessing, awaken in you a great love to God. In short, the love of God shed abroad in the gospel is the great and powerful object that must be meditated upon;

and the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, the most effectual means to keep these objects close to the heart ; and then doubts will vanish.

4. The mercies of daily providence declare much of the goodness of God to you, and to make him more amiable. Christians are much wanting to themselves and to their duty to God, when they do not increase their sense of God's goodness by their ordinary comforts : Deut. xxx. 20, 'Thou shalt love him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days ;' 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, it is 'the living God, who giveth us richly to enjoy all things' in this present world ; and Ps. lxviii. 19, 'The God of our salvation, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.' Every day's and hour's experience should endear God to us. It is his sun that shineth to give thee heat, and influence, and cherishing. It is out of his store-house that provisions are sent to thy table. He furnisheth thy dishes with meat, and filleth thy cup for thee. He did not only clothe man at first : Gen. iii. 21, 'Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them ;' when he turned unthankful man out of paradise, he would not send them away without a garment. As he performed that office then, so still he causeth the silkworm to spin for thee, and the sheep to send thee their fleeces ; only there is a wretched disposition in man, we do not take notice of that invisible hand, which reacheth out our comforts to us. Acts of kindness in our fellow-creatures affect us more than all those benefits we receive from God. What should be the reason ? Water is not sweeter in the dish than in the fountain. Man needeth himself, never giveth so freely and purely as God doth, but out of some self-respect. No kindness deserveth to be noted but the Lord's, who is so high and glorious, so much above us, that he should take notice of us. Nothing but our unthankfulness is the cause of this disrespect, and forgetting the goodness of his daily providence, and our looking to the next hand, and to the ministry of the creature, and not to the supreme cause.

Third case of conscience about love, is about the intenseness and degree of it. The soul will say, God is to be loved above all things, and to have the preferment in our affections, choice, and endeavours ; for he is to be loved with all the heart, and all the soul, Deut. vi. 5 ; and earthly things are to be loved, as if we loved them not. Now to find my heart to be more stirred towards the creatures than to God, and seem to grieve more for a worldly loss than for an offence done to God by sin ; to be carried out with greater violence and sensible commotion of spirit to carnal objects than to Jesus Christ, I cannot find these vigorous motions, or this constraining efficacy of love overruling my heart.

Ans. 1. Comparison is the best way to discover love, comparing affection with affection ; our affections to Christ with our affections to other matters ; for we cannot judge of any affection aright by its single exercise, what it doth alone as to one object, but by observing the difference and disproportion of our respects to several objects. The scripture doth often put us upon this kind of trial : 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Singly and apart a man cannot be so well tried, either by his love to God or his love to pleasure ; there being in all some kind of love to God, and a lawful allowance of creature

delights, provided they do not most take us; but when the strength of a man's spirit is carried out to present delights, and God is neglected or little thought of, the case is clear, that the interest of the flesh prevailth in his heart above the interests of God; so Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God;' mindeth the one and neglecteth the other; namely, to enrich his soul with spiritual and heavenly treasure; that followeth after spiritual things in a formal and careless manner, and earthly things with the greatest earnestness. The objection proceedeth then upon a right supposition, that a respect to the world, accompanied with a neglect of Christ, sheweth that the love of Christ is not in us, or doth not bear rule in us.

2. That God in Christ Jesus is to have the highest measure of our affections, and such a transcendent superlative degree as is not given to other things: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' He that loveth any contentment above Christ, or equal with him, will soon hate Christ; so Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' And the sincere are described, Phil. iii. 7-10; the nearest and dearest relations, and choicest contentments all trampled upon, all is dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of our Lord.

3. Love is not to be measured so much by the lively act, or the sensitive stirring of the affection, as the solid esteem, and the settled constitution. A thing may be loved intensively, as to the sensitive discovery of the affection, or appreciated by our deliberate choice, and constant care to please God. Partly, because the vigorous motion is hasty and indeliberate, is the fruit of fancy rather than faith. Some by constitution have a more moveable temper, and are like the sea, easily stirred. The reading the story of Christ's passions will draw tears from us, though we regard not God's design in it, nor how far our sins were accessory to these passions and sufferings. This qualm is stirred in us by fancy rather than faith; the story of Joseph in the pit will work the like effect, as of Jesus on the cross; yea, the fable of Dido and Æneas. In all passions the settled constitution of the heart sheweth the man more than the sudden stirrings of any of them. Men laugh most when they are not always best pleased; we laugh at a toy, but we joy in some solid benefit. True joy is a secure¹ thing, and is seen in the judgment and estimation, choice and complacency, rather than in the lively act. So love is not to be measured by these earnest motions, but by the deliberate purpose of the heart to please God. And partly, because the act may be more lively where the affection is less firm and rooted in the heart. The passions of suitors are greater than the love of husbands, yet not so deeply rooted, and do not so intimately affect the heart. Straw is soon enkindled, but fire is furnished with fit materials, and burneth better, and with an even and more constant heat. These raptures and transports of soul, fanatical men feel them oftener than serious christians, who yet for all the world would not offend God. And partly, because sensible things do

¹ Qu. 'severe,' or 'serious'?—ED

more affect us, and urge us in the present state. While we carry a mass of flesh about with us, our affections will be more sensibly stirred by things which agree with our fleshly nature; our senses, which transmit all knowledge to us, will be affected with sensible things rather than spiritual. I confess it is good to keep up a tenderness, and we should be affected with God's dishonour more than if we had suffered loss: Ps. cxix. 136, 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law;' but in some tempers grief cannot always keep the road and vent itself by the eye. Certainly the constant disposition of the soul is a surer note to judge by; sensible stirrings of affection are more liable to suspicion, and not so certain signs of grace, as the acts of the understanding and will; there is a possibility of a greater decay in them; you cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have to be rid of sin; a man may groan more sorely under the pains of the toothache, which is not mortal, than under the languishings of a consumption.

4. The effects of solid esteem are these—

[1.] When Christ is counted more precious than all the world, no affections to the creature can draw us to offend him, 1 Peter ii. 7. But all our love to them is still in subordination to a higher love. Love was principally made for God, and it is many ways due to him. Those excesses and heights which are in the affections will become no other object: the genius or nature of it sheweth for whom it was made. However, as God hath placed some love and holiness in the creature, so some allowance of affection there is to them. Worldly comforts are valuable as they come from God, and lead to him, as effects of his bounty, and instruments of his glory and service. All the value we put upon them should be this, that we have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. And when God trieth us, when Christ and worldly matters come in competition, then to be found faithful, and despise the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world, this is a sensible occasion to show the sincerity of our love. Which do you choose? the favour of God, or earthly friends? the light of his countenance, or the prosperity of the world?

[2.] When you can for God's sake incur the frowns and displeasure of the creature: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[3.] When a man maketh it his main care rather to please God than to gratify the flesh and promote his carnal interests. Your great business is to walk worthy of God to all pleasing, Col. i. 10; you labour to get Christ above all, and to live in his love. All cares and businesses give way to this, and are guided and directed by this. His favour is the life of thy life, and his love is thy greatest happiness. And thou darest not put it to hazard, nor obscure the sense of it by any indulgence to carnal satisfactions; and the greatest misery is his displeasure, and thereupon sin, which is the cause of it, is most hateful to thee. This is our constant trial, and certainly sheweth how the pulse of the soul beateth.

SERMON XXV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

THE fourth case of conscience is about the decay of love. The heart is not so deeply affected as it was wont to be with the love of God in Christ, nor is there such a strong bent of heart towards him, nor delight in him, and we grow more remiss in our work, feeble in the resistance of sin. Some that thus decay in love, are not sensible of it; others from the decay infer a nullity of love. Therefore because this is a disease incident to the new creature, something must be said to this case, both to warn men, and to direct them in the judging of it. In answering this doubt, take these propositions—

1. Leaving our first love is a disease not only incident to hypocrites, but God's own children. To hypocrites: Mat. xxiv. 12, 'The love of many shall wax cold ;' to God's own children : Rev. ii. 4, ' Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' They were commended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against hypocrites, patience in adversity, yet I have somewhat against thee; what is that? "*Οτι τὴν ἀγάπην σοῦ τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκας.*" Only here is this difference, though the disease be common to both, yet with some difference as to the event and issue. Hypocrites may make a total defection, and there may be in them an utter extinction of love: in others there is not a total failing, but only some degrees of their love abated. The love of hypocrites may utterly miscarry and vanish. Many seem to be carried on with great fervour and affection in the ways of God for awhile, yet afterwards fall quite away; partly, because it was a love built upon foreign motives, as the favour of the times, the air of education, the advantage of good company. Christ might be the object, but the world the ground and reason of all this love. Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. He must be both object and reason; otherwise when the reasons of our love alter, the object will not hold us. When times grow bad we grow bad with them. It is no wonder to see hirelings prove changelings; and many that loved a Christ triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. When the grounds alter, their affections are removed; their affections to Christ's cause and servants will cease also; as artificial motions cease, when the poise is down by which they are moved. Flying meteors, when the matter that feedeth them is spent, will vanish and disappear, or fall from heaven like lightning, when the stars, those constant fires of heaven, shine forth with a durable light and brightness. What is in one evangelist, 'take from him that which he hath,' is 'take from him that which he seemeth to have,' in another, Luke viii. 18. Partly, because if Jesus were loved for Jesus' sake, yet not with such a prevalent, radicated love, as could subdue contrary affections. There is a love of God, and a delight in his ways, which is cherished in us upon right motives and reasons, such as the offer of pardon, and eternal life by Christ; but this did but lightly affect the heart, not change it—a taste of the good word, Heb. vi. 4-6. At first men find a marvellous

sweetness in the way of godliness, hugely pleased with the possibility of pardon and happiness ; but these sentiments of religion are afterwards choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living ; and all that delight and savour which they had is lost, and comes to nothing, when temptations rise up in any considerable strength. Therefore we are warned to keep up the confidence and rejoicing of hope, Heb. iii. 6, 14, that well-pleasedness of mind, that liking, that comfortable savour which we had in the serious attending upon the business of religion.

2. God's own children may find their love cold and languishing, and that they go backward some degrees, and suffer loss in the heat and vigour of grace ; but though grace do decay, it is not utterly abolished. The church of Ephesus left her first love, but not utterly lost it ; the seed of God remaineth in them, 1 John iii. 9 ; there is some vital grace communicated in regeneration which cannot be lost. This is more radicated than the former ; it is a deeper sense of God's love, and doth more affect the heart, that it is not so easily controlled by contrary affections ; but chiefly because it is preserved by the influence of God's grace, with respect to his covenant, wherein he hath undertaken not to depart from us, so to keep afoot that love and fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. In the new covenant God giveth what he requireth, *donum perseverantiae*, as well as *præceptum*. Well then, though this love may suffer a shrewd abatement, yet it is not totally extinguished. *Gradus remittitur, actus intermittitur, sed habitus non amittitur*. Not only may the acts and fruits be few, but the measure of their inward love toward Christ may be abated, and yet not the habit lost or totally fail.

Secondly, That we may understand this disease the better, let us consider what is not it.

1. Not every lighter distemper, which the gracious heart observeth and rectifieth. There are failings and infirmities during the present state, and nothing is so uncertain as to judge of ourselves by particular actions ; in every act love doth not put forth itself so strongly as at other times, but a coldness and deadness seizeth upon us, which we cannot shake off. Or there may be failings, and we walk in darkness, Isa. lxiv. 7, for one act or so, and yet cannot be called a decay of love ; every act of known sin is not apostasy and defection, nor a degree of it, as every feverish heat after a meal in the spring is not a fever. Alas, for the generation of the just, if every vain thought, or idle word, or distempered passion, were a decay of love ! Some obstruction of love there may be for the present, which the soul taketh notice of, and retracts with sorrow and remorse, but still we hold on our course ; yet it is a stopping in our course : Gal. v. 7, 'Ye did run well ; who did hinder you ?'

2. Every loss and abatement of those ravishments, and transports of soul, or love-qualms, which we feel sometimes, is not this decay. There are some raised operations of love which cannot be constant ; in two cases especially we find them :—

[1.] At first conversion. There are then strong joys and liftings up of soul upon our first acquaintance with God. Partly, from the newness of the thing ; new things strangely affect and transport us, and

no doubt there are greater and more express admirations of grace, when first called out of darkness into light. And that is the reason why it is called ‘marvellous light,’ 1 Peter ii. 9. The change is more admired by them who are newly plucked out of that woeful condition they were in before, and possessed of such excellent privileges as they have in their estate; it makes them wonder the more at their own happiness; as a man in deep thirst hath a more sensible pleasure when he first cometh to meet with drink; his taste is more lively then, though he be thankful to God for the comfort of ordinary meals. Partly, because then our love wholly sheweth itself in sensitive expressions, whilst as yet love is not dispersed and diffused into the several channels of obedience. The tide may be high and strong, our only work at first being the thankful entertainment and welcome of grace; but when a man cometh to see how many ways he is to express his love to God, he may have a true zeal and affection to God in his christian course, a more rooted and grounded love, though he have not those ravishments and transports of soul, Eph. iii. 17. And partly, because the first edge of our affections is not yet blunted by change of cases. A young christian may be dandled upon the knee, have a more plentiful measure of God’s sensible presence than afterwards is afforded to him, not yet tried with smiles and frowns, and variety of conditions, and things prosperous and adverse. And do you think that the seasoned christian doth not love God as well as he, who hath been faithful to him in all estates, and not only passed the pangs of the new birth, but sundry encounters of temptations? Surely the tried man hath the stronger love, though it may be not such stirrings of affections, as he who is under God’s special indulgence, and from whom God for a while restraineth the violent assaults of furious temptations, till he be a little more confirmed and engaged in the profession of godliness.

[2.] After great comforts and enlargements. In the days of God’s royalty and magnificence, sometimes a christian hath high affections to God, and joys in the sense of his love, when God hath feasted him, and manifested himself to him: Ps. lxiii. 6, ‘My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.’ There are rich experiences of the love of God in his ordinances, which are vouchsafed to us, to which all the pleasures of the creature are no way comparable. Now these are very great mercies, but very doubtful evidences to try our estate by; for these overflowings of love are accidental things—*possunt adesse et abesse*. They are fitted for special spiritual occasions. We cannot always bear up under them. A settled calm, and the peace of the soul, is a greater mercy than these spiritual suavities or passionate joys; if we have our taste kept up, and our relish of heaven and spiritual things, or a fixed bent of heart towards them, it is a more constant and less deceiving experience. Paul had his raptures, but withal his thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble, 2 Cor. xii. 7. We cannot expect that God should entertain us always with a feast; if he give us the constant diet and allowance of his family, let us be thankful. And though we are not to rest in a dull quietness, but raise our hearts often to delight in God in more than an ordinary manner, yet no wise man can expect this should be our constant frame.

[3.] Though we should not lightly judge ourselves guilty of a decay of love, yet we should not lightly acquit ourselves of it. For it is a great evil, and a common evil, and many that are surprised with it are little sensible of it.

(1.) It is a great evil. Partly, because the highest degree of love does not answer to the worthiness of Christ, nor to the duty of the regenerate, who are called by him from such a depth of misery to such a height of happiness. And therefore when a man falleth from his first love, and that measure which he had attained unto, and doth come short not only of the rule, but of his own practice, it is the more grievous. To come short of the rule is matter of continual humiliation to us; but to come short of our own attainments is matter of double humiliation; and the rather, because he that pleaseth himself in such an estate doth in effect judge the first love to be too much, as if he had been too hot and earnest, and done more than he needed, when he had such a strong love to Christ. His former love is really condemned, and thereby Christ is disesteemed, as if not worthy to be beloved with all the soul, and all the might, and all the strength. And partly, because as our love decayeth, so doth our work; either it is wholly omitted, or else we put off God with a little constrained, compulsory service, which we had rather leave undone than do; our delight in our work is lessened. As when the root of a tree perisheth, the leaves keep green for a while, but within a while they wither and fall off; so love, which is the root and heart of all other duties, when that decayeth, other things decay with it. The first works go off with the first love, at least, are not carried on with that care, and delight, and complacency, as they should be. And partly, because of the punishment which attendeth it. Christ is jealous of his people's affection, and cannot endure that he should not be loved again by those whom he so much loveth, and therefore hasteneth to the correction of this temper, and those that allow themselves in it: Rev. ii. 5, 'Behold I will come against thee quickly.' He threateneth to that church a removal of their candlestick, when their zeal of christianity was abated. When a people grow weary of Christ, they shall know the worth of him by the want of him. So when particular christians grow weary of God, and suffer a coldness and indifference to creep upon their hearts, he cometh by some smart judgment to awaken them, and will make them feel to their bitter cost, what it is to despise or neglect a loving Saviour, 2 Chron. xii. 8.

(2.) It is a common evil. For it is a hard matter to keep up the fervency of our love, therefore are there so many exhortations even to the best. The commended Thessalonians are thus prayed for, 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God;' and Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God.' The best are apt to remit something of their delight in God, and their constant study to please him; and our watchfulness is mainly to preserve this grace. There is so much self-love in us, love of our own ease and carnal satisfaction, so much love of the world, and such a constant working, warring principle to draw us off from God and heavenly things, that we cannot sufficiently stand upon our guard, and take heed to ourselves, that we do not quench this heavenly fire that should always burn in

our bosoms. The generality of professors have no such care; if they do not wholly cast off religion, they are satisfied, though their love to God be exceeding cold; and as the hen as long as she hath one or two of her brood to follow her, doth not mind the loss of the rest, so they, as long as they do a few things for God, mind not the loss of many degrees of grace.

(3.) Many that are surprised with it, are little sensible of it; because spiritual distempers are not laid to heart, till they openly appear in their effects and fruits. A man may be much in external duties, and yet his love may be cold; the life of his duties may be decayed, though the duties themselves be not left off; as the Pharisees tithed mint and cumin, and all manner of herbs, but passed over judgment, and the love of God, Luke xi. 42. Some small thing the flesh may spare to God, when as yet the heart is in a great measure withdrawn from him. There may be a decay in the degree of love, when there is no total falling from former acts: he may continue his course of outward duty, though he doth not act so vigorously from love as he was wont to do; he is colder in obedience, and his delight in God is not so great as formerly; his work is carried on with more difficulty and regret, and it is more grievous to obey; the acts and fruits are fewer, though they do not wholly cease, and are not animated with such a working, active love; therefore many times men are so insensible, that they throw off all ere they mind their distemper. As the glory of God, in Ezekiel, removed from the temple by degrees, first from the holy place, then to the altar of burnt-offerings, then to the outer court, then the city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the city, to see if they would bring him back again; so in this case men grow cold towards God. God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet, then out of the family, then more indifferent as to public duties; then sin beginneth to hurry us to practices inconvenient; first we sin freely in thought, then foully in act, and all because we did not observe the first declinings.

[4.] The decay of love is seen in two things; the remission of degrees, or the intermission of acts.

(1.) The remission of degrees of our love to Christ, or to God in Christ. To understand this we must know what is the essential disposition of love. It is an esteeming, valuing, and prizeing God above all things, which is manifested to us by a constant care to please him, a fear to offend him, a desire to enjoy him, and a constant delight in him. Now when any of these are abated, or fail, as to any considerable degree, your love is a-chilling or growing cold. First, Our constant care to please him. They that love God, and prize his favour, and have a sense of his mercy in Christ deeply impressed upon their hearts, they are always studying how they shall appear thankful for so great a benefit: Ps. cxvi, 12, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' Therefore their business and work is to please God: Col. i. 10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing;' and Isa. lvi. 4, 'That choose the things that please thee, and take hold of thy covenant;' and 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As you have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more.' A study to please is the true fruit of thankfulness. Whilst love is in vigour and strength, this

disposition beareth sway in the heart; but now when it is a more indifferent thing, whether God be pleased or displeased, or not so greatly minded, when a man beginneth to please his flesh or men, and can dispense with his duty to God, and our intention is less sincere, not so much to please and honour God, as to gratify ourselves, then love is decayed. Secondly, The next is like it, a fear to offend. If you can be content to do anything and suffer anything, rather than displease God, and lose his favour, God's love is dearer than life, his displeasure more formidable than death itself, love is strong: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?' But when this fear to offend is weakened, your love decayeth. Thirdly, A desire to enjoy him in Christ. A strong bent and tendency of heart towards God argueth a strong love. When we cannot apprehend ourselves happy without him, count all things dung and dross, Phil. iii. 7-9, when we desire a sense of his love, or our reconciliation by Christ, this vehement desire after Christ cannot endure to want him, if we are deeply affected with that want, and make hard pursuit after him: Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' We desire his grace, or sanctifying Spirit, are here hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and the perpetual vision of him hereafter. As our desires abate, so there is some abatement of the degree of our love. Fourthly, Delighting in him, or in the testimonies of his favour, more than in any worldly thing: Ps. iv. 6, 'Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, than in the time when their corn and wine is increased;' and Ps. cxix. 14, 'I delight in the way of thy testimonies more than in all riches.' Accordingly there is an observing of his coming and going, his presence or absence; we mourn for the one, Mat. ix. 15; we rejoice in the other, when God is favourable and propitious, either manifesting his love to us, or helping us in our obedience to him.

(2.) Intermission of acts, or effects of love. These more sensibly declare the former; for the weakness or strength of the decree¹ is seen by the effects; when the heart grows cold and listless, and loose in our love to God, the soul is not made fruitful by it. Now the effects of love do either concern God, sin, or the duties of obedience.

(1st.) With respect to God. Love as to the effects of it is often described—First, By thinking and speaking often of him: Ps. lxiii. 6, 'I remember thee on my bed, and meditate of thee in the night watches;' and, Ps. civ. 24, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet.' The wicked are described to be those that forget God, Ps. ix. 17; and seldom or never think of his name: Ps. x. 4, 'God is not in all their thoughts.' It is the pleasure of the soul to set the thoughts on work upon the object of our love. Now when our hearts and minds swarm with vain thoughts and idle imaginations, and thoughts of God are utter strangers to us, if they rush into our minds, they are entertained as unwelcome guests, you have no delight in them; it is to be feared your love is decayed. For surely a man that loveth him will think often upon him, and speak reverently of him, and be remembering God both in company and alone; upon all occasions his main business lieth with God. He is still to do his will, to seek his glory, and to live as in his sight and presence, and subsists by the constant supports he receiveth from him.

¹ Qu. 'degree'?—ED.

Secondly, As love implieth a desire of nearer communion with him so we will be often in his company in duties. Frequency and fervency of converse with God in prayer, and other holy duties, is an effect of love. There cannot a day pass, but they will find some errand or occasion to confer with God, to implore his help, to ask his leave, counsel, and blessing, to praise his name : Ps. cxix. 164, ‘Seven times a day will I praise thee.’ Now when men can pass over whole days and weeks, and never give God a visit, it argueth little love : Jer. ii. 32, ‘My people have forgotten me days without number.’ There is little love where there is a constant strangeness : Ps. xxvi. 8, ‘I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth ;’ they love ordinances, because there they meet with God ; and Ps. lxiii. 2, ‘That I may see thee as I have seen thee.’ They cannot let a day pass, nor a duty pass. God is object and end ; they seek him and serve him. Love is at least cold, if not stark dead, when God is neglected, when we have no mind to duties, or God is neglected in them.

(2d.) With respect to sin. When the sense of our obligation to Christ is warm upon the heart, sin doth not escape so freely ; love will not endure it to live and act in the heart. Grace will teach us to war and strive against it, Titus ii. 12. ‘Do we thus requite the Lord ?’ Or is this thy kindness to thy friend ? Sin is more bewailed : as she wept much, because she loved much, Luke vii. 47. Now when you wallow in sin without remorse, have lost your conscientious tenderness, can sin freely in thought, and sometimes foully in act, spend time vainly, have not such a lively hatred of evil, Ps. xcvi. 10, let loose the reins to wrath and anger, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled, speeches are idle, yea, rotten and profane ; wrath and envy tyrannise over the soul ; you are become vain and careless, more bold and venturous upon temptations and snares, less complaining of sin, or groaning under the relics of corruption ; surely love decayeth.

(3d.) With respect to the duties of obedience. Love where it remaineth in its strength,

First, Breedeth self-denial, so that the impediments of obedience are more easily overcome, and so we are the more undaunted, notwithstanding dangers ; as Daniel more unwearied in the work of the Lord, patient under labours, difficulties, and sufferings. Love will be at some expense for the party beloved, and will serve God whatever it costs us ; nay, counts that duty worth nothing that costs nothing, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Now when every lesser thing is pleaded by way of bar and hesitancy, and all seemeth too much, and too long, and too grievous to be borne, love is not kept in vigour ; an unwilling heart is soon turned out of the way, and everything is hard and toilsome to it. Secondly, It maketh us act with sweetness and complacency : 1 John v. 3, ‘His commandments are not grievous.’ Acts of love are sweet and pleasing ; therefore when you have left the sweetness and complacency of your obedience, the fervour of your love is decayed ; otherwise it would be no burden to you to be employed for a good God. Thirdly, It puts a life into duties, Rom. xii. 11, ‘Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ Otherwise the worship of God is performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner ;

sin is confessed without remorse, or sense of the wrong done to God ; prayer for spiritual blessings without any such ardent desire to obtain them ; returning thanks without any esteem of the benefits, or affection to God in the remembrance of them ; singing without any life, or affection, or delight in God, or spiritual melody in our hearts ; conference of God and heavenly things, either none or very slight, and careless hearing without attention ; reading, without a desire of profit ; our whole service like a carcase without a soul. As faith enliveth our opinions, so doth love our practices ; and as dry reason is a dead thing to faith, so without love everything done God-ward, is done slightly ; why do we find more life in our recreations, than in our solemn duties, but because our love is decayed ?

[5.] Having now found the sin, let us consider the causes of it.

(1.) One cause or occasion may be the badness of the times. The best christians may decay in bad times. The reason is given, Mat. xxiv. 12, ‘Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many shall wax cold.’ Iniquity beareth a double sense ; either a general or a more limited sense. When there is a deluge of wickedness, sin by being common groweth less odious. The limited sense is, taking iniquity for persecution ; because of the sharpness of persecution many shall fall off from christianity. This should not be so ; christians should shine, like stars, brightest in the darkest night, Phil. ii. 15, 16 ; or like fire, or a fountain, hottest in coldest weather ; as David, in Ps. cxix. 126, 127, ‘It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law ; therefore I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold.’ But it is hard to maintain the fire, when the world keepeth pouring on water. There is a certain liberty which we are apt to take in evil times, or a damp and deadness of spirit, which growtheth upon us.

(2.) It cometh from a cursed satiety and fulness. Our affections are deadened to things to which we are accustomed, and we are soon cloyed with the best things. The Israelites cried out, Nothing but this manna ! ‘A full stomach loatheth a honey-comb.’ When first acquainted with the things of the Spirit, communion with God, and intercourses with heaven, we are affected with them, but afterwards glutted ; but this should not be, because in spiritual things there is a new inviting sweetness to keep our affections fresh and lively, as in heaven God is always to the blessed spirits new and fresh every moment ; and proportionable in the church, where there is more to be had, still greater things than these. In carnal things this satiety is justifiable, because the imperfections of the creature which formerly lay hid are discovered upon fruition, and all earthly things are less in enjoyment than they were in expectation ; but it is not so in spiritual things ; every taste provoketh new appetite, 1 Peter ii. 3.

(3.) From a negligence or sluggish carelessness. We do not take pains to keep our graces alive ; we do not *ἀναζωντυπεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6, ‘rouse up the gift,’ that is in us. As the priests in the temple were to keep in the holy fire, so we by prayer and diligent meditation, constantly keeping love a-work, watchfulness against the encroachments of wordly and fleshly lusts ; and when we neglect these things love decreaseth.

(4.) Sometimes it cometh from freeness in sinning. Neglect is like

not blowing the fire hid in the ashes ; sinning is like pouring on water : 1 Thes. v. 19, ‘Quench not the Spirit.’ Secure dalliance with the pleasures of sin brings a brawn and deadness upon the heart, and God is neglected, and our love to him very cold.

[6.] There remaineth nothing more, but the cure and remedy against this evil ; and that concerneth prevention or recovery.

(1.) The remedy, by way of prevention is,

(1st.) That we should labour to get love more fixed and rooted : Eph. iii. 17, ‘That ye may be rooted and grounded in love.’ At first our affection may hastily put forth itself, like the hasty blossoms of the spring, which are soon nipped ; but a christian’s business is to get a solid affection and bent of heart towards God, that love may be as it were the very constitution of our souls, and the frame of our hearts may be changed into an addictedness and devotedness to God. Many content themselves with flashes, and good moods, and meltings at a sermon, which soon vanish and come to nothing, because they have no root. The word of grace, which revealeth the love of God, is not ingrafted in their souls, so as that it may be the very frame and temper of their hearts. Many receive this word with joy : Mat. xiii. 21, ‘But he hath no root in himself.’ They were once affected with the offers of remission of sins and eternal life ; but this affection is not so great, so deep, as to control contrary affections. Christ doth not dwell in the heart by faith ; a visit there is, but not an abode ; a transient motion of the Spirit, but not a constant habitation : a draught of the running stream, but they have not the fountain within them, John iv. 14.

(2d.) You must increase and grow in love, if you mean to keep it : Phil. i. 9, ‘I pray, that your love may abound more and more ;’ 1 Thes. iv. 1, ‘As ye learned how to walk and to please God, so abound in it more and more.’ At first love is but weak, but progress of it is to be endeavoured, otherwise a small measure of it meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, that it cannot maintain itself. Nothing conduceth to a decay more than a contentment with what we have received ; and there is no such way to keep what we have, as to go on to perfection. They that row against the stream, if they do not ply the oar, will be driven back by the force of the tide ; therefore every day you should hate sin more, and love self less ; the world less, yet Christ more and more. Love being as it were the heart of the new creature, he that hath most love hath most grace, and is the best and strongest christian.

(3d.) Love must still be excited, and kept in act or exercise ; not lie as a sleepy, useless habit in the soul. It must be the principle and end in every duty—that is, we must work from love, and for love ; from love, for it is not an act of thankful obedience, if love be not acted in it. Oh, beg that this grace may be more increased in us ! All graces, ordinances, word, sacraments, tend to keep in this love-fire, and keep it a-burning. All these institutions serve but till love is perfect, and then they cease, but love remaineth. Besides all this, if love be not excited and kept a-work, carnal love will prevail. A corrupt and base treacherous heart had need be watched and kept from starting back. The back-bias of corruption will again recover strength, for love cannot lie idle in the soul ; either it must be directed and carried

forth to God, or it will look out to worldly things. If our love ceaseth, concupiscence ceaseth not; and within a while the world will become superior in the heart, and mammon be placed in God's room and stead—be respected as our end and happiness—for man cannot live, but he must have some last end of his actions. Nor can he long cease from owning and respecting that end, but the soul will set up another in its stead; therefore the more we desist from loving God, the more we entangle ourselves with other things, which get strength and secure their interest in our souls, as they are confirmed by multiplied acts. Therefore the love of God must still be kept a-foot, that no other thing be practically preferred before him, John iv. 14. It must always be springing up and flowing forth.

(4th.) Observe the first declinings, for these are the cause of all the rest: evil is best stopped in the beginning. If when first we began to grow careless, we had taken heed, it would never have come to that sad issue it doth afterwards; a heavy body running downwards gathers strength by running, and still moveth faster. Look then to your first breaking off from God, and remitting your watch and spiritual fervour. It is easier to crush the egg, than kill the serpent: he that keepeth a house in constant repair prevents the fall and ruin of it. When first the evil heart beginneth to draw us off from God, and to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, then we must, Heb. iii. 12, 13, humble our souls betime, that we may stick close to Christ.

(2.) By way of recovery, where there hath been a decay. Take the advice of the Holy Ghost: Rev. ii. 5, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.'

(1st.) A serious consideration of our condition, in those words, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen.' Recollect and sadly consider, what a difference there is between thee and thyself; thyself living and acting in the sense and power of the love of God, and thyself now under the power of some worldly and fleshly lust. Consider what an advantage thou hadst against temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, when love was in strength, and how much the case is altered with thee now; how feeble and impotent in the resistance of any sin. Say, as Job, chap. xxix. 2, 3, 'Oh that it were as in the months past, in the day when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head,' or as the church: Hos. ii. 7, 'It was better with me then than now.' In our returning we should have such thoughts as these; I was wont to spend some time every day with God; it was a delight to me to think of him, or speak of him, or to him; now I have no heart to pray or meditate. It was the joy of my soul to wait upon his ordinances; the returns of the Sabbath were welcome unto me: but now what a weariness is it! Time was when my heart did rise up in arms against sin, when a vain thought was a grief to my soul; why is it thus with me now? Is sin grown less odious, or God less lovely?

(2d.) The next advice is, Repent; that is, humble yourselves before God for your defection. It is not enough to feel yourselves fallen; many are convinced of their fallen and lapsed estate, but do not humble and judge themselves for it in God's presence, bewailing their case, smiting on the thigh, praying for pardon. It is a great sin to grow weary of God: Isa. xlivi. 22, 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou

hast been weary of me, O Israel ;' and Micah. vi. 3, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee ? and wherein have I wearied thee ? testify against me.' His honour is concerned in it ; therefore you must the more feelingly bewail it.

(3d.) Do thy first works. We must not spend the time in idle complaints. Many are sensible that do not repent ; many repent, *i. e.*, seem to bewail their case, but languish in idle complaints for want of love, but do not recover this loss by serious endeavours. You must not rest till you recover your former seriousness, and mindfulness of God : it is one of the deceits of our hearts to complain of negligence, and not redress it. The Nazarite who had broken his vow, he was to begin all again, Num. vi. 12. So you that have broken with God, you must do what you did at first conversion ; let your work be sin-abhorring every day, and engaging your heart anew to God ; and make no reservation, but so give up yourselves to the Lord, that his interests may prevail in your hearts again above all sinful and vile inclinations, or whatever hath been the cause of the withdrawing your hearts from God, and the decay of your love to him.

SERMON XXVI.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

WE come now to the *fifth* case of conscience, about loving God with all the heart, a thing often required in scripture. The original place is, Deut. vi. 5, 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might.' It is repeated by our Lord, Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and all thy mind ;' but in Mark x. 30, and Luke x. 27, 'With all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength.' This sentence was famous ; it was one of the four paragraphs, which the Jews were wont to write upon their phylacteries, and fastened to their door-posts, and read in their houses twice a-day. Mark, here is variety of words, sometimes three words are used, and sometimes four. Some go about accurately to distinguish them—by the heart interpreting the will ; by the soul, the appetite and affections : by the mind, the understanding ; and by might, bodily strength ; all put together with that intensive particle 'all' imply great love to God. Now a doubt ariseth hereupon, how this is reconcilable with the defects of God's children, and the weaknesses of the present state. Yea, it seemeth to confine our affections, that there will be love left for no other things ; for if God have all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, what is there left for husband, wife, children, christian friends, and other relations, without which respect human society cannot be upheld and preserved ? The doubt may be referred to two heads.

1. The irreconcilableness of the rule with present defects.

2. The confinement intimated is destructive of our respect to our natural comforts and relations.

First, Concerning the first, how it is reconcilable with those many partibilities and defects of God's children:—

I answer—First, by distinguishing. This sentence may be considered as an exaction of the law, or as a rule of the gospel.

1. As an exaction of the law. And so it serveth to show us, what duty the perfect law of God requireth; complete love without the least defect—all the heart, all the soul, and all the might; a grain wanting maketh the whole unacceptable, as one condition not observed forfeiteth the whole lease, though all the rest be kept. That this reference is not to be altogether slighted, appeareth by the occasion; a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, saying, ‘Master, which is the great commandment of the law?’ Mat. xxii. 35. Now Christ's aim was to beat down his confidence by proposing the rigour of the law: Luke x. 28, ‘This do, and thou shalt live;’ the best course to convince self-justiciaries, such as this lawyer was, thereby to rebate their confidence and to show the necessity of a better righteousness; and so it is of use this way for a double end.

[1.] To convince us of the necessity of looking after the grace of the Redeemer.

[2.] To prepare us to entertain it with the more thankfulness.

[1.] Of the impossibility of keeping the law, and so the necessity of the use of the Redeemer. For to fallen man the duty of the law is impossible, and the penalty of it intolerable; therefore all men by this covenant, according to this covenant, are enclosed within a curse, shut up, and necessitated to seek the grace of the gospel: Gal. iii. 23, ‘But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed.’ The law cannot be satisfied, unless the whole man obey wholly in all things, which to corrupt nature is impossible, and so it inevitably driveth us to Christ, who accepteth us upon more equitable terms.

[2.] To make us thankful for our deliverance by Christ. When you read these words, all the heart, all the soul, all the might, all the strength, bless the Lord Jesus in thy heart, that God doth not deal with us upon these terms; that we are rid of this hard bondage, exact obedience or eternal ruin: ‘That the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death,’ Rom. viii. 2, i.e., of that rigorous covenant, which to man fallen serveth only to convince of sin, and to bind over to death. If God should sue us upon the old bond, a straggling thought, a wandering glance, might make us liable to the curse.

2. As a rule of the gospel. ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. ‘With all,’ this is not wholly antiquated, and out of date in the gospel; we must distinguish what is required by way of precept, and what is accepted by way of covenant; for the rule is as strict as ever, but the covenant is not so strict—to wit, that we must necessarily perish if we break it in the least jot or tittle. The rule is as strict as ever, and admitteth of no imperfection, either of parts or degrees; but the covenant is not so strict, but accepteth of a perfection of parts, and of such a degree, as is dominating and prevailing,

or doth infer truth of God's image, or a single-hearted disposition to love and serve God to the uttermost of our power. Let me prove both these:—

[1.] That the rule is as strict as ever: that is necessary; partly, with respect to the lawgiver, for no imperfect thing must come from God; and partly, with respect to the time when it was given us, in innocency; and partly, with respect to us, who are under the rule of the law; for if the rule did not require a perfect love, our defects were no sins, for 'where there is no law there is no transgression,' Rom. iv. 15. And that this particular law is still in force appeareth by that of Christ, Mat. xxii. 37-40, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself; on these two hang the law and the prophets.' Surely that law and prophets include all known scripture that is binding to us.

[2.] But the covenant is not so strict. For where weaknesses are bewailed, striven against, and in some measure overcome, they shall not be prejudicial and hurtful to our salvation; for in the new covenant God requireth perfection, but accepteth sincerity; and though we cannot bring our graces to the balance, it is enough that we can bring them to the touchstone: Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou upright;' though not perfect, yet if upright, though there be a double principle, flesh and spirit, yet if not a double heart. A sincere love, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is loving God with all the heart and all the soul; so it is said of David, 1 Kings xiv. 8, 'He kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in mine eyes.' David had shrewd failings, yet because of his habitual purpose, so the Lord speaketh of him; so of Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 25, 'Like unto him there was no king, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his might, according to all the law of Moses.' Josiah also had his blots and imperfections, yet his heart was prevalently set towards God; so that all the heart and all the soul may be reconciled with the saint's infirmities, though not with a vicious life.

Secondly; I shall show you how far we are obliged to love God with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, if we would not forfeit our covenant claim of sincerity.

1. We are bound to strive after perfection, and, as much as may be, to come up to the exactness of the rule. The endeavour is required, though as to success, God dealeth graciously with us: Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I were already perfect, or had already attained, but I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.' The perfection of our love to God is part of our reward in heaven; but we are striving after it, we cannot arrive to the perfectness of the glorified estate, but we are pressing towards it. Allowed failings cannot stand with sincerity, for he that is contented with a little grace hath no grace—that is to say, he that careth not how little God be loved, provided he may be saved, doth not sincerely love God. A true christian will endeavour a constant progress, and aim at no less than perfection. Christians, this is still your rule, all the heart and all the soul, and all the might. The Lord hath such a full right to your love, that coldness is a kind of a hatred, and the grace which we

received in conversion will urge us to it; for *tendentia mentis in Deum* is the fruit of conversion, and God is not respected as a means, but as an end. We do more unlimitedly desire the end than the means. The whole latitude of understanding, will, and affections is due to him, without division or derivation to other things.

2. We are so far obliged as to bewail defects and failings; as Paul groaneth under the relics of corruption: Rom. vii. 24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' A true christian would love God more perfectly, delight in him more abundantly, bring every thought and practice into subjection to his will; if not, they are kept humble; it is a burden and trouble; they cannot allow themselves in this imperfect estate; the same new nature which checketh sin before it is committed, mourneth for it after it hath got the start of us. Resistance is the former dislike of the new nature, and remorse the latter dislike after we are overcome. None have such cause to bewail failing as the children of God; they sin against more light and love; and if conscience be in a right frame, they will bemoan themselves, and loathe themselves for their sins; and their love, which is seen in a care to please, is also seen in sorrow for offences when they break out, and a trouble at the lower degrees of love.

3. We are so far obliged as in some measure to get ground upon them, for a christian is to grow in grace. There are some sins which are not so easily or altogether avoidable by the ordinary assistances of grace vouchsafed, as sins of ignorance, sudden surreption, and daily incursion; and there are other sins which may be and are avoided so far by God's children, so as that they do not frequently, easily, and constantly lapse into them. There are other grievous evils which christians do not ordinarily fall into, unless in some rare cases. A christian may lapse into them, as being overborne by the violence of a temptation, as Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's adultery; foul sins, but there was no habitual aversation from God; but yet a foul fall cuts the strength of a christian resolution, being overborne by some violent temptations. Now against the first of these, striving against unavoidable infirmities is conquering; the second must be mortified and weakened. In the other it is not enough to strive against them, but forsake them and grow wiser for the future.

Secondly. As to the second part of the case, the confinement.

Ans. God doth not require that we should love nothing, think of nothing, but himself. The state of this life will not permit that; but God must have all the heart so far (1.) That nothing be loved against God. A prohibited object is forbidden; sin must not be loved, as they loved darkness more than light, John iii. 19. (2.) Nothing above God with a superior love: Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.' (3.) Not equally with God. Other things are excluded from an equal love, for then our love to God is but a partial and half love, divided between God and the creature. No; Luke xiv. 26, 'We must hate father and mother, and wife and children,' &c.; God above all, and our neighbour as ourself. God can endure no rival; this love to man is but the second commandment,

and must give way to the first. (4.) Nothing apart from God, but as subordinate to him : Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' I must love my friends in him, and my foes for him, his people because of his image, all because of his command ; God in his creatures, Christ in his members ; myself, wife, children, natural comforts, in God and for God. To set up anything as a divided end from God is a great evil, as well as to set up anything as an opposite end to him. It may be a damnable sin to love any worldly comfort without subordinating it to God : James iv. 4, 'Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity to God ? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God ;' 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Apart from God is spiritual adultery.

How shall I do in short to know that I have the love of God in me ? What is the undoubted evidence, by which I may judge of my state, or know that my love to God is sincere ?

Ans. 1. It concerneth us more to act grace, than to know that we have it. Do you set yourselves with all your hearts, and with all your souls to love God, and you shall soon know that you love him. Things will discover themselves, when in any good degree of predominancy ; and love, when it is in any strength, cannot well be hidden from the party that hath it ; as a man burning hot will soon feel himself warm. But small things are hardly discerned ; a weak pulse seemeth to be as none at all. Many languish after comforts, and spend their time in idle complaints, and so continue the mischief they complain of. Up and be doing ; and bestow more time in getting and increasing, and acting grace, than in anxious doubtings whether you have any ; comfort cometh sooner by looking to precepts, which tell us what we should do, than signs, which tell us what we are, and the acting of love is the best way to have it manifested ; so Christ telleth us, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' There is the way to get the manifestation of grace, and of Christ's owning us. Give God his due obedience, and you shall not want comfort ; it is a purer respect that we show to God by minding his interest rather than our own ; and to love him, and wait for the time when we shall know that we love him.

2. Yet it is our duty to try seriously the sincerity and soundness of our respects to Christ ; partly, because the heart is very deceitful, and we must search warily. Christ putteth Peter to the question thrice : John xxi. 15-19, 'Lovest thou me ?' It is some conviction to a liar to make him repeat his tale. A deceitful heart will be apt to reply, that he is not worthy to live who doth not love Christ ; but urge it again and again, Do I indeed love Christ ? Yea, leave not till you can appeal to God himself for the sincerity of your love : 'Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee.' And partly also, because there is a great deal of counterfeit love ; therefore the apostle saith, Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ

in sincerity.' Many profess love, whose love when it cometh to be tried will be found counterfeit and insincere. Our Lord Jesus calleth the Pharisees, who were quarrelling with him for healing a man upon the sabbath day, John v. 42, 'But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.' They pretended great love and zeal for the sabbath, and therefore opposed the working of that miracle. Men may pretend zeal for God's glory and his ordinances, who yet have no true love to God; as many pretend great esteem of the memory of Christ, yet hate his servants and slight his ways.

3. The great standing evidence of love is obedience, or a universal resolution, and care to please God in all things. I shall prove to you from scripture first that it is so, then from reason.

[1.] From scripture: John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' None truly love Christ but those that make conscience of obedience; so verse 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' so verse 23, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words;' so John xv. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Friendship consisteth in a harmony of mind and will; there is such a real friendship between Christ and believers, which maketh them cordial, cheerful, zealous, and constant in their obedience to him: 1 John ii. 5, 'But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;' that is, hath produced its consummate effect; so 1 John v. 3, 'This is love, to keep his commandments.' Love implieth the doing of those things which are most grateful and acceptable to the party beloved; and this is the prime, if not the only way, of demonstrating our love to God, which the scripture so much insisteth upon; so Exod. xx. 6, 'That love me, and keep my commandments.'

[2.] Now for the reasons. Our love to God is not the love of courtesy that passeth between equals, but a love of dutiful subjection, such as is due from an inferior to a superior; such as is that of servants to their master, subjects to their prince and governor, creatures to their creator; and therefore is not discovered by a fellow-like familiarity, so much as by obedience. God's love to us is an act of bounty, our love to him is an act of duty; and therefore he will see that the trial of this love of gratitude or this returning love be sincere, if it produce an uniform and constant obedience, or an universal care to please God in all things; faith is known by love, and love by obedience, Gal. vi. 15, and Gal. v. 6.

4. This obedience which love produceth must be active, constant, and pleasant.

[1.] Active and laborious. Love will not rest in word and profession only, or lie lurking in the heart as an idle habit, but will break out in sensible proofs and endeavours, and keep us hard at work for God: Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' So it is where there is love; but for others everything is tedious to flesh and blood; and where love is cold, men cannot overcome a little ease and sloth of the flesh. Now how can they know the love of God, who will do nothing for him, or no great thing for him? Till you abound in the work of the Lord, love doth not discover itself; love will be working and labouring, and ever bringing forth fruit;

and that is not real and sincere which is not such, which will not be at the pains and charge of obedience.

[2.] Constant; for one act or two will not manifest our love to God, but a course of holiness: John xv. 10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept the Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' And love must show itself, as by obedience, so by a constant obedience; and therefore it requireth some competent space of time before we can be fully assured of the sincerity of it. When we find it growing, it is very comfortable, and when we have rode out so many temptations, it is an encouragement still to go on with God.

[3.] It must be pleasant: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous;' and Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' When we cheerfully practise all that he requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things; it is meat and drink to do his will; the thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter as commanded by him. A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness of his love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere love.

5. In the course of our obedience, God ordereth some special seasons for the discovery of our sincere love to him. As Abraham had his trial, so we: Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.' And God trieth, *non ut ipse hominem inveniat, sed ut homo se inveniat*: Gen. xxii. 12, 'For now I know thou fearest God.' That is a document, a sensible proof of the reality and sincerity of grace, as under sore trials, God doth most manifest himself to us: upon these occasions, when put upon great self-denial, we have a sensible occasion to see which we love most; it was a nice case before. When faithfulness to God's interest is dearer to us than our own credit, liberty, life, then is a special sensible occasion to improve the sincerity of our love. Such things are pleaded, Ps. xliv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forsaken thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.' God's choicest comforts are for them that overcome temptations.

Sixth case of conscience. But how shall we do to get or increase this love to Christ? Is there anything that man can do towards it, since love is of God, and a fruit of his Spirit?

Ans. 1. It is true that a man in his natural estate cannot by his own power bring his heart to love God. Partly, because men naturally are lovers of themselves, that is, of their carnal selves, and so lovers of pleasure more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. So addicted to vain and sensual delights, the flesh and world have intercepted their love and delight: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh.' Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh? and can men be brought by their own inclination to abhor the sin they dearly love, and a worldly mind overcome the world? Therefore till grace heal our natures, we cannot love God or Christ. First, the carnal love must be mortified: Deut. xxx. 6, 'The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Till God pare away our foreskin, and mortify our carnal love and inordinate passions, there can be no love to God or Christ raised or enkindled in our hearts. And partly, because men are haters of God, Rom. i. 30, enemies to him, as standing in the way of their desires, and keeping them by his laws from things which they affect, as forbidden fruit: Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by evil works;' and Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and James iv. 4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' There is a mixture of love, palpable and evident by nature, and though men might be imagined to have some kind of love to God as a creator, and preserver, and benefactor, yet they hate him as a law-giver and a judge. Therefore till this enmity be broken, there is no hope of bringing the heart to love God.

2. Since God worketh it, it must be in the first place begged of him. As the apostle prayeth for others, so do you for yourselves: Eph. iii. 17, 18, 'That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God.' We have but light apprehension of the love of God in Christ; it leaveth no impression upon us: 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God,' set straight your hearts, *κατρρθύναι*; they are fluttered abroad to all manner of vanities, and therefore the psalmist prayeth, Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to thy fear.'

3. Though we pray to God, yet we must not neglect to use the means. For God will meet with us in our way, in a way proportionable to our reason, and we are to meet with him in his way, in a way of duty and means. God doth not overrule us by a brutish force, nor raise an inclination in our wills, but in the way of understanding; the ordinary way of working upon man is by the understanding, and so upon the will. What are the means of raising our love?

[1.] A knowledge of our necessity, and the excellency and worth of Christ and his beneficialness to us: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift.' We love little, because we know little; saints and angels, who know him most, love him best; in heaven there is complete love because there is perfect knowledge; that the apostle's prayer sheweth, how we are rooted and grounded in love, Eph. iii. 17-19.

[2.] Serious consideration; the more you lay out your thoughts in the serious consideration of these things which most tend to feed and breed love. Objects and moving reasons, kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great means and instruments appointed both by nature and grace to turn about and move the soul of man. Consideration, frequent and serious, is God's great instrument to convert the soul: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' and to get, keep, and increase grace: witness this text, 'For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.' Therefore the total want of love, or the weakness of love, comes for want of consideration. Oh then, think often of God's goodness,

amiableness, and kindheartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, what he is in himself, a pardoning God ; none like him, Mic. vii. 18 ; what he hath done for you from your youth upward. Every one should be his own historian : Ps. cxxxix. 17, ‘ How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! ’ Every morning come to a new account and audit—what he is willing yet to do for you in Christ, to pardon all your sins, to sanctify you by his Spirit, and to give you eternal life, and a portion among his people. .

[3.] You must increase love by a constant familiarity and communion with God. Strangeness dissolveth friendship, but our hearts settle towards them with whom we frequently converse : Job xxii. 21, ‘ Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at peace.’ When men neglect prayer, their hearts set loose from God. Therefore upon all occasions maintain a constant commerce between God and you.

[4.] If there be a breach, be soon reconciled again. If a man was unclean, he was to wash his clothes before even : Eph. iv. 26, ‘ Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.’ As between man and man, so between God and man ; ‘ forgive us this day,’ as well as ‘ give us this day.’ When discontents settle they are hardly removed : Jer. viii. 4, ‘ Shall they fall, and not arise ? turn away, and not return ? ’ It is spoken to backsliding Israel. A candle newly put out sucketh light again, if you kindle it before it stiffeneth and groweth cold ; so the sooner we recover ourselves, the less breach is made by it.

[5.] Mortify love to the world. This is baneful to the love of the Father : 1 John ii. 15, ‘ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ When the soul is filled with one object, it cannot attend upon another, though more excellent. The love of the world is that which first kept us from God, and still it dulleth the edge of our affections, and diverteth us from him ; therefore watch against the enticements of the flattering world, and love the creature in subordination to God.

Now let me exhort you to the love of Christ.

1. The genius and disposition of love sheweth it is fit for nothing but God. As he that looketh upon an axe will say it is fit to cut, so he that looketh upon love will say it was made for God. Love is for that which is good ; it is the motion of the soul to what is good for us ; good is the object of love. The more good anything is, the more it must be loved ; this is the disposition of nature, and grace doth direct it and set it aright. Now who is so good as God, who hath all goodness in himself ? All that goodness which is in the creature is derived from him, and dependeth on him ; he hath given us all the good which we have received, and that out of mere love ; yea, he hath given us love itself. Now whom will you love, if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you ? All loveliness is in him and from him ; the creature hath none of itself nor for itself. Is sin such a thing, that for the love of it you will fly from God and goodness ?

2. Love is but for one object. The affection is weakened by dispersion, as a river divided into many channels. In conjugal society, which is the highest instance of love : Mal. ii. 15, ‘ And did not he make one ? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one ?

That he might seek a godly seed.' God in the beginning made but one man for one woman, and one woman for one man, yet he could, if he would, have created more persons at once; it was not out of defect of power, but wise choice, that their affections might be the stronger. Conjugal affection would be weakened, if, as they are in the brutes, they were scattered promiscuously to several objects. The true object indeed of love is but one, and that is God; he is loved for himself, and other things for his sake. All lines end in the centre; so all the inclinations of the creature should terminate in God. Love was planted in us for this purpose, that other things might be loved in God and for God.

3. The force and vehemency of love sheweth it was made for God.

[1.] It is a vehement affection, that swayeth the whole soul. God only deserveth these heights and excesses which are in love. We make gods of other things, when we love them without subordination to him. Samson was led about like a child by Delilah. Men contemn all things, honour, name, credit, riches, for their love, ease, pleasure. Turn this to money, covetousness is idolatry, Eph. v. 5; to pleasure, and the belly becometh a god, Phil. iii. 19.

[2.] It is love maketh us good or bad men. Men are as their love is. We are not determined from our knowledge, but our affections; a man may know evil, and yet not be evil; he is a carnal man that hath carnal desires; love is the inclination and bias of the will. Such as a man is, so is his love. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. It is love transformeth the heart; it changeth us into the nature of what is loved. This is the difference between mind and will; the mind draweth things to itself, and refineth and purifieth them; but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is drawn after them, made like them, as the wax receiveth the stamp and impression of the seal. Carnal objects make it carnal, and earthly things earthly, and heavenly things heavenly, the love of God godly: Ps. cxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so are all they that put their trust in them,' stupid, senseless as their idols. Love transformeth into the things we love; therefore without love all is nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

[3.] So much of the Spirit of God as you have, so much love; for love to God is the proper gift of the Spirit to all the adopted sons of God, to cause them with filial affection and dependence to cry, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6; not always seen in challenging an interest in him, as coming in a childlike affection and a spirit of love.

4. The sad consequence of not loving Christ. It is no arbitrary matter; the apostle suiteth his threatening to the form of the highest curse among the Jews: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,' cursed till the Lord come; suspension from the congregation, casting out, giving over all hopes of the party offending, and leaving them till the Lord's coming. There is no hope for you. Though you do not hate, yet if you love not, there is a curse that will never be repealed. God made Christ's love so exemplary, to astonish us with kindness. Anathema is too good for him, the apostle cannot express it under a double curse; you will be cast out of the assembly of the first-born if you repent not.

5. Consider what advantages we have by love. An interest in all the promises : Eph. vi. 24, ‘Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ;’ and Rom. viii. 28, ‘All things shall work together for good to them that love God ;’ and James i. 12, ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receivé the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ;’ James ii. 5, ‘Hath not God chosen the poor of the world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him ?’ Faith giveth a right, but love a sensible interest. We cannot take comfort in the sense, till sure of the condition and qualification ; our faith is not right, till it beget love.

6. It is not only among the graces, but the rewards. Entire love is a part of our happiness in heaven ; it is our only employment there to love God, to love what we see, and possess what we love ; so that love is the end and final happiness of man. Love is the final act, as God is the final object. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and love is the perfection of it.

SERMON XXVII.

*For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—
2 COR. v. 14.*

In the words observe two things: the force and operation of love ; the reason of it ; ‘For we thus judge,’ &c. In which two things,—

1. The instance of Christ’s love to us ; *one died for all.*
2. The means of improving it ; *we thus judge.*

In the instance or argument which love worketh upon, you have—

[1.] The act of Christ’s love ; *he died.*

[2.] The peculiarity of it to him ; *he alone died.*

[3.] The benefit that redounds to others ; *one for all.*

2. The means of improving ; ‘We thus judge,’ to wit, after due deliberation and thinking upon the matter. It implieth—First, consideration ; and secondly, determination.

[1.] Consideration, ‘if one,’ if one or since one. It is a suppositional concession, if one appointed to die, and accepted in the name of all the rest.

[2.] Determination ; we so far conclude thence. The determination of the judgment maketh way for the resolution of the will ; the one is formally expressed, the other implied.

Doct. That Christ’s dying one for all is the great instance and argument that should be improved by us to breed and feed love.

Here let me inquire—

1. What dying one for all signifieth.
2. How the great love of God therein appeareth.
3. How suited this argument is to breed that love which God expecteth—a thankful return of obedience.

4. In what way this must be improved ; ‘we thus judge,’ by considering and judging upon the case.

First. What dying one for all signifieth, *ὑπὲρ πάντων*. It is not only in *bonum omnium*, for the good of all ; but *loco et vice omnium*, in the room and stead of all, as appeareth by the double notion by which Christ’s death is set forth, as a ransom and a sacrifice. A ransom : Mat. xx. 28, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, ‘and to give his life a ransom for many,’ 1 Tim. ii. 6, *ἀντὶ λύτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων*, ‘who gave himself a ransom for all.’ The ransom was paid in the captive’s stead ; therefore if Christ did die as a ransom for us, it was not only for our good, but in our stead. The other notion is that of a sacrifice : Eph. v. 2, ‘He gave himself as a sacrifice and an offering to God, a sweet-smelling savour ;’ so Heb. ix. 26, ‘He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’ Now the sacrifice was offered instead of the worshippers ; and therefore if Christ were our sin-offering, he died not only for our good, but in our stead. When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go ; so the sinner escapeth, and Christ was substituted into our room and place ; he suffered what we should have suffered, and died that we may live : ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom,’ Job xxxiii. 24. This dying one for all proveth two things—

1. The verity of his satisfaction.
2. The sufficiency of his satisfaction.

1. The verity and truth of his satisfaction ; for when all should have died, Christ died one for all. We were all dead with respect to the merit of our sins, and the righteous constitution of God’s law ; and Christ came to die one for all, he represented our persons, and took our burden upon himself, and did enough to ease us.

[1.] He represented our persons as a surety, and so took the person of a debtor : Heb. vii. 22, ‘By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament ;’ or as a common person appeareth in the name of all that are represented in him. That Christ was a common person appeareth by Rom. v. 14 ; where Adam is said to be, *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, namely, as Adam was a common person representing all his posterity, and as his act had a public influence on all descended from him ; one was enough to ruin, and one enough to save ; and Christ was as powerful to save, as Adam to destroy. Yea, there is a *πολλῷ μᾶλλον* on Christ. The value of Adam’s act depended upon mere institution ; and Christ was not only instituted, but had an intrinsic worth in his person as God ; therefore the apostle saith, ‘Not as the offence, so also is the free gift :’ ver. 15, ‘For if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many ;’ and ver. 16, ‘As the judgment was by one to condemnation ; so the free gift is of many offences unto justification ;’ and ver. 18, ‘As by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life ;’ and ver. 19, ‘As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many were made righteous.’ So also, 1 Cor. xv., Adam and Christ are compared, representing both their seeds ; and we read there of the first Adam and the last Adam, ver. 45, and the first man and the second man, ver. 47 ;

those two men were all mankind in representation. Well then, we see Christ, sustained our persons, and stood in our place and room as mediator. We must look upon him as a father carrying all his children on his back, or lapped up in his garment, through a deep river, through which they must needs pass, and, as it were, saying to them, Fear not, I will set you safe on land. So are you to look upon Christ with all his children wading through the floods of death and hell, and saying, Fear not, worm Jacob; fear not, poor souls, I will set you safe.

[2.] As he took our persons, so he took our burden upon himself; for we read that he was made sin, and made a curse for us.

(1.) Made sin : 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ To be made is to be ordained or appointed, as Christ made twelve disciples, Mark iii. 14, *ἐποίησε*, appointed, and Jesus Christ is said to be made Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 38; so Christ was made sin—that is, ordered and appointed to bear the punishment of sin, or to be a sacrifice for sin. Sometimes the punishment of sin is called sin; as Gen. iv. 13, ‘My sin is greater than can be borne,’ that is, the punishment; so ver. 7, ‘Sin lieth at the door,’ that is, the punishment is at hand; so Christ cometh without sin: Heb. ix. 28, ‘To bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;’ not liable any more to bear the punishment of it. Sometimes it is put for a sacrifice for sin; so the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. iv. 8, that is, the sacrifices; and Paul saith, Rom. viii. 3, ‘That by sin, he condemned sin in the flesh;’ that is, by a sin-offering. Well then Christ, who knew no sin, had no inherent guilt, was made sin, that is, liable and responsible to God’s justice for our sakes. As we are made the righteousness of God in him, so was he made sin for us; not by inhesion, which ariseth from inherent guilt, but by imputation or voluntary susception; that is, took upon himself an obligation to satisfy the demands of justice for our sakes, as if he had said, What they owe, I will pay.

(2.) Made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. Christ as a surety did suffer our punishment, and endured what we have deserved: Isa. liii. 4, ‘Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.’ The sorrows of the sinner were the sorrows of Christ. The law had said, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,’ Gal. iii. 10. Now the sentence or curse of the law must not fall to the ground, for then the end of God’s governing of the world could not be secured; his law would seem to be given in jest, and his threatenings would be interpreted to be a vain scare-crow, and the sin of the creature would not seem so odious a thing, if the law might be transgressed and broken, and there were no more ado about it; therefore Christ must come and bear this curse. But you will say then, that Christ should have suffered eternal death and the pains of hell, which were due to us.

Ans. 1. He suffered what was equivalent to the pains of hell; so much of the pains of hell as his holy person was capable of. In the curse of the law we must distinguish the essentials from the accidentals. The essentials consist in two things, *pœna damni* and *pœna sensus*;

the *pœna damni* is the loss of God's presence, and the comfortable and happy fruition of him ; the *pœna sensus* lieth in falling into the hands of the living God, or being tormented with his wrath. Now both these Christ endured in some measure. He was deserted, Mat. xxvii. 26 ; there was a suspension of all sensible and actual comforts flowing from the Godhead, and his soul was filled with a bitter sense of wrath ; and there he was made heavy unto death, Mat. xxvi. 39, and Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief,' which occasioned great agonies. Now for the accidentals—the place—we should for ever have suffered in hell, the prison of the damned ; but that circumstance was abated to Christ ; he suffered upon earth. One that is bound as a surety for another needeth not go to prison, provided that he pay the debt ; all that law and justice requireth is, that the surety pay the debt, which, if he doth not or cannot do, then he must go to prison ; so here the justice and holiness of God must be satisfied ; but Christ needed not to go into the place of torment.

2. The time of continuance. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God, and therefore they must lie by it world without end ; as one that payeth a thousand pounds by a shilling or a penny a-week, is a long time in paying the debt ; whereas a rich and able man layeth it down *in cumulo*, in one heap all at once ; or as a payment in gold taketh up less room than a payment in pence or brass farthings, yet the sum is the same. Christ made an infinite satisfaction in a finite time, and bore that wrath of God in a few hours which would have overwhelmed the creatures. The eternity of wrath is abundantly recompensed in the infiniteness of the person, and the greatness of the sufferings ; his blood was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28.

3. Another circumstance accompanying the pains of the second death, and unavoidably attending it in reprobates, is desperation, and a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God, Heb. x. 7 ; but this is accidental to the punishment itself, and only occasioned by the sinner's view of their woful and remediless condition ; but this neither did nor could possibly befall the Lord Jesus, for he was able by his divine power both to suffer and satisfy, to undergo and overcome, this dreadful brunt of the wrath of God, and therefore expected a good issue in his conflict : Ps. xvi. 9, 10, 'My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption ;' it is applied to Christ, Acts ii. A shallow stream may easily drown a child, whereas a grown man may hope to escape out of a far deeper place ; yea, a skilful swimmer out of the ocean. Christ passed through that sea of wrath which would have drowned all the world ; yea, came safe to shore. Well then, it sheweth the reality and truth of his satisfaction.

2. It sheweth the fulness and sufficiency of his satisfaction, and that Christ undertook no more than he was able to perform ; for, though but one, yet he is accepted for all, as one sacrifice offered by the high priest was enough for all the congregation. The burnt-offering for private men, and for the whole congregation, was the same—a young bullock without blemish. All had but one sacrifice ; only for private men the burnt-offering was offered by common priests,

and for the congregation by the high priest; or as the same sun serveth for every one, and also for all the world, so the same Christ, the sun of righteousness, serveth for all; or as one Adam was enough to ruin all, so one Christ was enough to save all; yea, much more, as in Christ the divine power is more effectual. The scripture often insisteth upon the oneness of the person, and the oneness of the sacrifice; as in that oracle which dropped from the mouth of Caiaphas—‘It is expedient for one to die for all the people,’ John xi. 51, 52, which is interpreted of the redemption of the elect, ‘He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.’ This one Christ is accepted for all; for it is more than if all the world had died. God was more pleased with this sacrifice than he was displeased with Adam’s sin, or the sins of all the world. 1 Tim. ii. 6, ‘There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;’ as one mediator, so one sacrifice: Heb. x. 10, ‘We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;’ and ver. 14, ‘For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;’ and Heb. ix. 26, ‘He once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;’ and ver. 28, ‘So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.’ The scripture doth so emphatically insist upon this circumstance, to show that there needeth no more to be done to satisfy God’s justice; that is sufficiently done already, which is a great comfort to us; for you are not left under the care of making satisfaction for your own sins, but only of accepting the Redeemer who hath satisfied; and if you perish, it will be for want of faith in you, not for want of satisfaction in Christ: the business is even brought to your doors, and left upon your hands, whether you will accept of the grace offered.

Secondly. How the great love of God appeareth in this.

1. In that he would not prosecute his right against us, who were fallen in law and unable to recover ourselves. *Noxa sequitur caput*—‘The soul that sinneth shall die,’ Exod. xxxii. 33. He might have refused any mediation, and all our necks might have gone for it. It was great love that God would think of a surety; he might have exacted the whole debt of us: Thou hast sinned, and thou shalt pay. It is some relaxing of the rigour of the law that he would take person for person. Moses was rejected when he interposed as a mediator, but so was not Christ.

2. That he would take one for all. Justice would not let go the sinner without a ransom, but it is the wonderful grace of God that he would take satisfaction from one man in the name of all those for whom he offered to satisfy, that God would accept of Christ; Heb. ii. 9, it is said that ‘by the grace of God he should taste death for every man;’ that which moved God to transfer the punishment of our sins upon Christ, was his mere grace, and the special favour of God.

3. This one so dear to him—his own son, the son of his love, his only begotten Son—he is the person that must be our surety: John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlast-

ing life ;' and Rom. viii. 32, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' Oh, the unspeakable love of God ! We are fond ; Eli would not let fall one rough word to his children ; God had but one son, and he was made a sacrifice for sin.

4. This one so worthy in himself : person for person is the hardest bargain. In some wars captives are redeemed with money, but 'we are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. If there be man for man, proportion is observed, and men of like quality are exchanged. You never heard of such a demand, that a king should be given to ransom a servant. We were slaves, and Christ was the heir of all things ; the prince was given for slaves, the just for the unjust ; the Lord God Almighty, who filleth heaven and earth with his glory, was given for poor worms ; the king of all the earth 'came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28.

5. And he given unto death : one died for all. If Christ had come on earth to take a view of our misery, it had been another matter. Captive princes have kingly entertainment, but he came to be sold for the price of a slave—thirty pieces, Exod. xxi, 31 ; the ransomer is not bound to suffer, and be ruined, if the party be so ; but our redeemer must die : 1 Peter iii. 18, 'But Christ hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Till death there was no full satisfaction. If ever any had cause to love his life, Christ had ; his soul dwelt with God in a personal union. It is no great matter to quench and put out such glimmering candles as we are ; we are often a burden to our own selves ; Christ had more to lose than all angels and men. They said of David, 2 Sam. xvii. 3, 'Thou art better than ten thousand of us.' Every man's life is valuable ; it is the creature's best inheritance. What was Christ's life, which was enriched with the continual presence of God !

6. This one to die so willingly : Ps. xl. 7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will.' You cannot meditate enough on these places : Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men ;' and Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' He hath contentment enough in the Father, right enough to the creatures, rich in all the glory of the Godhead ; what need had he to become man and die for sinners, but only that he loved us, and gave himself for us—for me and thee ? Gal. ii. 20.

7. That he should die such a painful and accursed death : 'He bore the iniquities of us all,' Isa. liii. 6. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other trouble. David, that bore his own sins, cried out, Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'They are a burden too heavy for me.' What was it for him to bear the iniquities of us all ? This made his soul heavy to death, filled up with such bitter agonies that he did sweat drops of blood. Alas ! sometimes we feel what it is to bear one sin, what is it to bear many, to bear all ? He did not only bear them in his body, but in his soul ; this put him upon tears, and fears, and amazement—'Now is my soul troubled, what shall I say ?' John xii. 27. As to bodily pains, many of the martyrs suffered more and with

cheerful minds ; but Christ stood in the place of sinners before God's tribunal. Well then, you see what a powerful argument this is to breed and feed love.

Thirdly, How this argument is suited to breed that love which God expects, even a thankful return of obedience. It is proper for that purpose.

1. From the end of Christ's death, which was to sanctify us : Eph. v. 25-27, 'Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;' and Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people ;' not only redeem us from wrath, but redeem us from sin, to restore the image of God which we had lost, as well as his favour. Now unless we would have Christ to be frustrate of his end and die in vain, we should endeavour to be holy. Did he die for sin that we might take liberty to practise it ? come to unloose our cords, that we might tie them the faster ? pay our debt, that we might run on upon a new score ? make us whole, that presently we might fall sick ? or give us an antidote, that we might the more freely venture to poison ourselves ? No ; this is to play the wanton with his grace.

2. The right which accrueth to our Redeemer by virtue of the price paid for us. When a slave was bought with silver and gold, his strength and life and all belonged to the buyer : Exod. xxi. 21, 'He is his money.' So we are purchased by Christ, redeemed to God, Rev. v. 9, and we are bound to him that bought us, to serve him in righteousness and holiness all our days, Luke i. 74 ; to glorify him in our bodies and souls, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. The pardon ensuing and depending on his death. It is that God may be more loved, reverenced, feared, and obeyed : Ps. cxxx. 4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ;' Luke vii. 47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven to her.' They are bound to love most to whom most is forgiven : Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'For he will speak peace to his people, but let them not return to folly.' The remission of sins past is not for a permission of sin to come, but a great bridle and restraint to it. His mercy in remitting should not make us more licentious in committing, otherwise we build again the things we have destroyed. When we sought for pardon, sin was the greatest burden which lay upon our consciences, the wound that pained us at heart, the disease our souls were sick of ; and shall that which we complained of as a burden become our delight ? shall we tear open our wounds, which are in a fair way of healing, and run into bonds and chains again, after we are freed of them ?

4. The greatness of Christ's sufferings sheweth the heinousness and filthiness of sin. It was God's design to make sin hateful to us by Christ's agonies, blood, shame, and death : Rom. viii. 3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh,' that is, by a sin-offering. God showed a great example of his wrath by that punishment which lighted upon our surety, or the flesh of Christ ; his design was for ever to leave a brand

upon it by his sin-offering or ransom for souls. Now shall we make light of that which cost Christ so dear, and cherish those sins which put our Redeemer to grief and shame? If the stain and filthiness of sin could not be washed out but by the blood of Christ, shall we think it no great matter to pollute and defile ourselves therewith? This were to crucify Christ afresh, Heb. vi. and to trample the blood of the covenant under foot, Heb. x. 24.

5. The terribleness of God's wrath, which can be appeased by no other sacrifice. And shall not we reverence this wrath, so as not to dare to kindle it again by our sins? For 'it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31; Christ's instance sheweth that; for 'if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

6. But the great argument of all is a grateful sense of our obligation to God and Christ; for God so loved the world, that when nothing else was fit for our turn, he sent his Son, and his Son loved us, and gave himself to die for us; where we see the love of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that can be imagined; this is such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it, a mystery without controversy great. We may find out words to paint out anything that man can do to us or for us. The garment may be wider than the body, but things truly great strike us dumb. God, being the chiefest good, would act in a way suitable to the greatness of his love; therefore, let us love him and delight in him, who hath called together all the depths of his wisdom and counsel to save a company of forlorn sinners, in such a way whereby his wrath may be appeased, his law satisfied, and full contentment given to his justice; that his mercy may have the freer scope, the sinner saved, and the sin branded and condemned. Oh, what shall we render to the Lord for so great a benefit? Let us unboundedly give up ourselves to be governed and ordered by him at his will and pleasure, not loving our lives to the death, Rev. xii. 11; life must not be excepted out of this resignation, Luke. xiv. 26.

Fourthly, How this must be improved. First, by consideration; secondly, by determination; for it is said, 'We thus judge.'

1. Consideration; whereby spiritual truths are laid close to the heart; the soul and the object are brought together by serious thoughts. God will not govern us as brutes, and rule us with a rod of iron, by mere power and force. The heart of man is overpowered by the weight of reason and serious inculcative thoughts, which God blesseth to the beginning and increase in our souls; therefore cast in weight after weight till the judgment be poised, and you begin to judge and determine how just and equal it is, that you should give up yourselves to God and to Christ, who have done those great things for you. God often complaineth for want of consideration: Isa. i. 3, 'But my people will not consider;' and, Deut. xxxii. 29, 'Oh that my people would be wise, and consider their latter end;' and, Ps. lx. 22, 'Consider this, ye that forget God.' Most of our sin and folly is to be charged upon our inconsideration; so also our want of grace. It is God doth renew and quicken the soul, yet consideration is the means. The greatest

things in the world do not work upon them that do not think of them ; therefore how shall the power of the word be set on work, but by serious and pressing thoughts ? The truth lieth by ; reason is asleep till consideration quicken it. The fault of the highway ground is, 'they hear the word but understand it not.'

The first help of grace is attention : Acts xvi. 14, 'She attended to the things that were spoken by Paul.' What is this attending but a deliberate weighing in order to choice, minding, esteem, and pursuit ? Those invited to the wedding, Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it.' Non-attendance is the bane of the greatest part of the world ; they will not suffer their minds to dwell upon these things.

2. There is determination, or a practical decree. We thus judge in all reason ; when we have considered of it, we cannot judge otherwise. The scripture often speaketh of this : Acts xi. 23, 'He exhorted them all with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord ; ' 2 Tim. iii.

This, like a bias in a bowl, carrieth the authority of a principle in the heart. These decrees enacted in the heart are frequently mentioned in scripture—in the case of religion in general ; as Ps. cxix. 57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord ; I have said I wouldest keep thy words.' Sometimes some particular duty, when the heart is backward : Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord ; ' sometimes in compliance with some divine motion ; Ps. xxvii. 8, 'I said, thy face, Lord, will I seek ; ' sometimes after a doubtful traverse or conflict with temptations : Ps. lxxiii. 28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God ; I have put my trust in the Lord God ; ' generally it is a great help against a sluggish and remiss will. Christians are so weak and fickle and inconstant, because they do not use this help of decreeing or determining for God, and binding and engaging their souls to live to him.

Use. It exhorts us—

1. To affect our hearts and ravish our thoughts with this great instance of the love of God. It is the commanding circumstance to set it forth : John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends ; ' and, Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' God hath not another son to bestow upon us—a better Christ to die for us. Love is gone to the utmost ; nor can we be redeemed at a dearer rate, that we may be affected with it.

[1.] Let us not look upon it only as an act of heroical friendship, but in the mediatory notion ; for so it is most penetrating and sinketh into the very soul—and that is the way to draw solid comfort ; whereas the other only begetteth a little fond admiration. We look upon it as an act of generosity and gallantry, and that begets an ill impression in our minds ; but to look upon it as a mediatorial act, breedeth the true, broken-hearted sense and thankfulness which God expecteth. We all stood guilty before the tribunal of divine justice, and he was surrogated by the covenant of redemption, and made sin and a curse for us ; he was to be responsible for our sins, according to the pact and agreement between him and his Father, Isa. liii. 10. There is the covenant of redemption described—'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,

and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' It is not to be looked upon as a strange history, and so to stir up a little wonder or a little fond pity, as at a tragical story, but to fill us with a broken-hearted sense and deep thankfulness, that the Son of God should come to recover our forfeited mercies. When we were sentenced to death by a righteous law, and had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation, and by our multiplied rebellions made ourselves ready for execution, then the Son of God pitied our case, undertook our ransom, and paid it to the utmost farthing.

[2.] Consider the consequent benefits, both here and hereafter : Isa. liii. 5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed ;' and, Rev. i. 5, 6, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.' In the heavenly priesthood nothing will appear in us displeasing to God ; the love and praise of God will be our whole employment. In expectation of this happy hour we must begin our sacrifices here.

[3.] Let us not by affected scruples blunt the edge of our comfort. Christians would know too soon their peculiar interest in God's love, whether intended to us, and so disoblige ourselves from our duty. These affected scruples are a sin, because secret things do not belong to us, but the open declarations of God concerning our duty, Deut. xxix. 29. It is the part of a deceitful heart to betray a known duty by a scruple. We would not do so in case of temporal danger. If a boat be overturned, we will not make scruples. When any come to our help, whether they shall be accepted or not, do not refuse your help and cure, but improve the offer : 1 Tim. i 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' If Christ came to save sinners, I am sinner enough for Christ to save, creeping in at the back-door of a promise. God hath opened the way for all ; if they perish it is through their own default. He hath sent messengers into the world : Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned ;' and if you are within hearing of the gospel, you have more cause to hope than to scruple : Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of salvation sent ;' not brought but sent ; 'Know it for thy good,' Job v. 27 ; and rouse up yourselves. 'What shall we say to these things ?' Rom. viii. 39, 'If God be for us, who can be against us ?'

[4.] Though weak in faith and love to God, yet Christ died one for all. The best have not a more worthy redeemer than the worst of sinners. 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature.' Exod. xxx. 15, the rich and poor have the same ransom ; 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours ;' and, Rom. iii. 22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe ; for there is no difference ;' and, 2 Peter i. 1, 'To them who have obtained like precious faith with us.' A jewel received by a child and a giant, it is the same jewel ; so strong and weak faith are built upon one and the same righteousness of Christ.

2. Let us devote ourselves to God in the sense of this love, to walk before him in all thankful obedience. Christ hath borne our burden,

and instead thereof offered his burden, which is light and easy; he took the curse upon him, but we take his yoke, Mat. xi. 29. He freely accepted the work of mediator, Heb. x. 7; will you as freely return to his service?

SERMON XXVIII.

Then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

WE have handled the intensiveness of Christ's love—he died; the extent—how 'for all' is to be interpreted; now the fruit, dying to sin and living to righteousness.

1. The first in this last clause—'Then were all dead,' not carnally in sin, but mystically in Christ; dead in Christ to sin. In the original the words run thus—*ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἡραὶ οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*, not dead in regard of the merits of sin, but dead in the merits of Christ; for the apostle speaketh here of death and life, with reference and correspondence to Christ's death and resurrection, as the original pattern of them; in which sense we are said to die when Christ died for us, and to live when he rose again.

2. He speaketh of such a death as is the foundation of the spiritual life: He died for them, then were all dead; and he died for them, that they might live to him that died for them and rose again. Our translation seemeth to create a prejudice to this exposition, 'were dead' in the Greek; it is—*οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*, 'all died,' or all are dead—that is, to sin, the world, and self-interests; and besides, it seemeth to be difficult to understand how all believers were dead when Christ died, since most were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world; and after they are converted, they feel much of the power of sin in themselves.

Ans. They are comprised in Christ's act done in their name, as if they were actually in being, and consenting to what he did—in short, they are dead mystically in Christ, because he undertook it; sacramentally in themselves, because by submitting to baptism they bind themselves and profess themselves engaged to mortify sin: actually they are dead, because the work at first conversion is begun, which will be carried on by degrees, till sin be utterly extinguished.

Doct. That when Christ died, all believers were dead in him to sin and to the world.

It is the apostle's inference, 'then were all dead.' The expression should not seem strange to us, for there are like passages scattered everywhere throughout the word. Therefore I shall show you,—

1. That this truth is asserted in scripture.
2. How all can be said to be dead, since all were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world.
3. How they can be said to be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.
4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die to sin and the world.

First, That this truth is asserted in scripture. To this end I shall propound and explain some places. The first is: Rom. vi. 6, ‘Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin.’ In that place observe—

1. The notions by which sin is set forth. It is called by the names of the old man, and the body of sin, and simply and nakedly. Possibly by the old man natural corruption may be intended; by the body of sin, the whole mass of our acquired evil customs; by sin actual transgressions; or, take them for one and the same thing, diversely expressed, indwelling sin is called an old man. A man it is, because it spreadeth itself throughout the whole man. The soul; for Gen. vi. 5, it is said, ‘Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.’ The body: Rom. vi. 19, ‘As you have yielded up your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity;’ and it is called an old man, as grace is called a new man and a new creature, and it is so called because it is of long standing; it had its rise at Adam’s fall: Rom. v. 12, ‘Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all, because all had sinned.’ And it hath ever been conveyed ‘since from father to son, unto all descending from Adam: Ps. li. 5, ‘Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;’ so that it is born and bred with us. And partly, because in the godly it is upon the declining hand, and draweth towards its final ruin and expiration. *De jure*, it is an old antiquated thing, not to be cherished but subdued; *de facto*, it is upon declining and weakening more and more. And this old man is afterwards called the body of sin—the whole mass of habitual sins, composed of divers evil qualities, as the body of divers members; this is our enemy.

2. Observe in the place, the privilege that we have by Christ’s death, ‘That our old man was crucified with him;’—that is, when Christ was crucified; and the apostle would have us know this, and lay it up as a sure principle in our hearts. The meaning is then; there was a foundation laid for the destruction of sin when Christ died; namely, as there was a merit and a price paid, and if ever our old man be crucified, it must be by virtue of Christ’s death.

3. Observe the way how this merit cometh to be applied to us. Something there must be done on God’s part, in that expression that ‘the body of sin may be destroyed,’ which intimateth the communicating of the Spirit of grace, for weakening the power, love, and life of sin; and something done on our part, ‘that henceforth we should not serve sin.’ There was a time when we served sin; but, being converted we changed masters, as the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 18, ‘Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.’ Now he that hath been servant to a hard and cruel master is the better trained up to be diligent and faithful in the service of a gentle, loving, and bountiful master. Before regeneration every one of us pleased the flesh; but when our eyes are opened by grace we see the folly, mischief, and unprofitableness of such a course, and therefore can the better brook another service which will be more comfortable and profitable to us. And in this new estate we do as little service for sin as formerly we

did for righteousness: Rom. vi. 20; ‘When you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;’ when righteousness had no power, and dominion over you, had no share in your time, strength, thoughts, affections, endeavours, you took no care, made no conscience of doing that which was truly good. You must now as strictly abstain from sin as then you did from righteousness; yea, you must do as much for grace as formerly you did for sin; ver. 19, ‘As you have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;’ as watchful, as earnest, as industrious to perfect holiness.

The next place is that, 1 Peter iv. 1, ‘Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.’ In that place there are three things notable—

(1.) The ground and foundation of the apostle’s argument; (2.) The exhortation built thereon; (3.) The reason connecting and joining both.

1. The foundation of his argument is, that Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,—that is, hath in our name and nature suffered the wrath due to us for sin.

2. The inference of duty built thereon, as that we should ‘arm yourselves with the same mind,’—that is, we must follow and imitate Christ also in suffering in the flesh; or, which is all one, a dying unto sin. This should be armour of proof to us against all temptations. If we had the same mind that he had, or could put on the same resolution,—to wit, to suffer in the flesh, or crucify our carnal nature, lusts and passions. Strongly resolve to desist from sin, for which Christ hath suffered, how pleasant soever it be to our flesh.

3. The reason which joineth both the argument and inference of duty together,—‘For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.’ This last clause cannot be understood of Christ, who never sinned, but of the believer. How shall we understand it of him? how hath he suffered in the flesh, and so ceased from sin? There are two expositions of it:—

[1.] Thus, one ‘that hath suffered in the flesh,’—that is, is crucified in his carnal nature, hath mortified his flesh; it hath not respect to suffering afflictions, but mortifying of sin, *πέπαυται ἀμαρτίας* ‘hath ceased from sin,’ no more to serve it henceforward; that ‘he should no longer live the rest of his time in the lusts of the flesh, but according to the will of God.’ This exposition inferreth it from Christ’s sufferings for us, that our mortification is in correspondence and conformity to Christ’s death, and as necessarily flowing from the virtue of his cross, and the obligation left thereby on all believers; but the second exposition maketh it clearer; thus—

[2.] The believer is reckoned a sufferer in Christ: he hath ‘suffered in the flesh’ when Christ suffered judicially, in his surety. Whatever sufferings were inflicted on Christ, the same are reckoned as inflicted on believers; and so to have ceased from sin, in regard of Christ’s undertaking to make him cease from it, and the obligation which Christ suffering in his room, putteth upon him to mortify it, the matter is as certain as if it were already done.

Another place is that, Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ.' There are three propositions included in that short speech: that Christ is crucified; that we are crucified; that we are crucified with Christ. It doth not imply any fellowship with him in the act of his mediation: there he was only taken, but we are spared, as Isaac was dismissed when the ram was taken for an offering, Gen. xxii.; and God saith, Job. xxxiii. 24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom;' or, as Christ told his persecutors, John xviii. 8, 'If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.' His offering himself in that sort was a pledge of his offering himself to the curse of the law and punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it. What then, doth our being crucified with Christ signify? It implieth our participation of the benefits of his mediation, as if we were crucified in our own persons.

Four considerations will clear it to you.

[1.] That Christ in dying did not stand as a private, but public person, in the place and room of all the elect; for he is their surety.

[2.] That the benefits which are purchased in his cross and passion are thereby made ours, as if we had been crucified in our own persons. We are really made partakers of the fruits of Christ's death.

[3.] The great benefit of his cross or sacrifice of himself was to put away sin, Heb. ix. 26.

[4.] Sin is put away, either as to the removal of the guilt of it: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is the blood of the new testament, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins;' or for subduing the strength of it: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness.' He died not only to obtain forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, but that we might die unto sin; so that his redeemed ones are strictly urged to mortify sin, because the old man of indwelling corruption did receive the stroke of death by his death; so that either in point of justification, when justice challengeth us for sins, we may send it to Christ, who died one for all, and may plead, I am crucified in Christ, he hath satisfied for me; or, in point of sanctification, we may, in the way which God hath appointed, expect the subduing of sin, as if we had merited this grace ourselves. It is a great advantage when we can say, 'I am crucified with Christ.'

The next place is that; Col. iii. 3-5, 'Ye are dead, therefore mortify.' It is spoken as a thing done already; ye are dead; yet there is a thing to be further done, therefore mortify. But how are we dead? partly in regard of the certainty, to assure us it shall be done, and partly to oblige us the more strongly to endeavour it, and partly, because we have consented to this obligation in baptism. All the members of the church have engaged themselves to employ the death and strength of Christ for the subduing of sin; they are dead, as they have upon this encouragement undertaken its death, and in part already begun it.

Secondly, How all can be said to be dead when Christ died, since most of the elect were not then born, or yet in being.

Ans. 1. When Christ was upon the cross he sustained the relation of our head or common person. It was not in his own name that he

appeared before God's tribunal, but in ours, not as a private, but as a public person ; so that when he was crucified all believers were crucified in him ; for the act of a common person is the act of every particular person represented by him, as a knight or burgess in parliament serveth for his whole borough and county. Now that Christ was such a common person appeareth plainly by this, that Christ was that to us in grace what Adam was to us in nature or sin. The first Adam was said to be *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, Rom. v. 14, 'The figure of him that was to come ;' and Christ is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 45, the second common person ; so that as we had a death in sin from the first Adam, so a death to sin from the second ; as we stood in Adam in paradise, so we stood in Christ upon the cross. Adam's act in paradise was in effect ours : in Adam, we all died, 1 Cor. xv. 21 ; so Christ's act was in effect ours ; in Christ we all died spiritually, and mystically. Adam did, as it were, lend his body in paradise : we saw the forbidden fruit with his eyes, gathered it with his hands, ate it with his mouth—that is, we were ruined by these things, as if we had been by and actually consented to his sin. So in Christ's representation on the cross, all believers are concerned as if they had been by and actually present, and had been crucified in their own persons, and borne the punishment of their own sins ; for all this was done in their name and stead, that they might have the benefit.

2. Christ was on the cross, not only as a common person, but as a surety and undertaker. I say, in his death there was not only a satisfaction for sin, but an obligation to destroy it ; there was an undergoing and an undertaking. As he is set out in the scripture under the notion of a second Adam ; so also of a surety : Heb. vii. 22, Christ is called 'the surety of a better testament.' Now he was a surety mutually, on God's part and ours. First, He was to engage for us to God, and in the name of God engaged himself to us. The tenor of both engagements is in Rom. vi. 6, 'That the body of death should be destroyed, that we should from thenceforth no longer serve sin.' As soon as we consent to this stipulation, this taketh effect. On God's part, Christ undertook to destroy the body of sin by the power of his Spirit, which should be given to us, to become a principle of life in us, and of death to our old man, Titus iii. 5. More particularly, we mortify the deeds of the body by the help of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. The Holy Ghost, when he reneweth the heart, puts into it a principle and seed of enmity against sin : 1 John iii. 9, 'He cannot sin, because the seed abideth in him ;' and as that is cherished and obeyed, sin is resisted and mortified ; and he actuateth and quickeneth it yet more and more, that it may prevail against the sin which dwelleth in us. Secondly, As our surety he undertook that we should no longer serve sin, that we should not willingly indulge any presumptuous acts, nor slavishly lie down in any habit or course of sin, or under the power of any carnal temper, but also should use all godly endeavours for the preventing, weakening, or subduing it. Christ's act being the act of a surety, he did oblige all the parties interested ; he purchased grace at God's hands, and bound us to use all holy means of watching, striving, humiliation, cutting off the provisions of the flesh, avoiding occasions, weaning the heart from earthly things, which are the bait and fuel of sin that keep it alive.

3. Our consent to this engagement is actually given when we are converted, and solemnly ratified in baptism.

[1.] It is actually given when we are converted : Rom. vi. 13, ‘As those that are alive from the dead, yield yourselves to God, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God ;’ ὅπλα, weapons ; we then give up ourselves to work, and first as to do his work, so to war in his warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Till the merit of Christ’s death be applied by faith to the hearts of sinners, they are alive to sin, but dead to righteousness ; but then they are dead to sin, and alive to righteousness, and as alive from the dead, and then yield up themselves to serve and please God in all things.

[2.] That this is solemnly done or implied in baptism ; for when we were baptized into Christ we were baptized into his death, Rom. vi. 3–5. In baptism we did, by solemn vow and profession, bind ourselves to look after the effects of Christ’s death, to mortify the deeds of the body, or, which is all one, renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; the devil, as the great architect and principle of all wickedness ; the world, as the great bait and snare ; the flesh, as the rebelling principle. Our baptism is certainly an avowed death to sin ; it implieth a renunciation by way of vow, for it is the answer of a good conscience towards God : and the ancient covenants were made by way of question and answer, 1 Peter iii. 21. The very washing implieth it ; washing is a purifying, and after purifying we must not return to this mire again ; 2 Peter i. 19, ‘He hath forgotten he was purged from his old sins.’ We promised to give over our old sins ; or as it is our first engrafting and implanting into Christ and his death, if when we are baptized, we are reckoned to be dead. The death of Christ was mainly to put away sin, and to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5 ; and Heb. ix. 26. Now sins were not taken away, that men may resume and take them up again. The great condemnation of the christian world is, that when Christ would take away their sins, they will not part with their sins.

[3.] How they can be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.

Ans. 1. By consenting to Christ’s engagement they have bound themselves to die unto sin. When we gave up our names to Christ, we promised to cast off sin, and therefore we are to reckon ourselves as dead to sin by our own vow and obligation, and accordingly to behave ourselves ; Rom. vi. 2, ‘How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?’ It is an argument not so much *ab impossibili* as *ab incongruo* ; ‘and ye are dead, therefore mortify your members that are upon earth,’ Col. iii. 3–5. If dead already, why should they mortify ? Dead, that is, bound to be dead. So a sinner, when he giveth up himself to God, doth honestly resolve and firmly bind himself to subdue corruption, root and branch, and to depart from all known sin.

2. When the work is begun, corruption is wounded to the very heart. And the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, Rom. vi. 14, ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ Sin is dead where it doth not extinguish the life of grace, but the life of grace doth more and more extinguish sin ; there its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season.

[3.] The work is carried on by degrees, and the strength of sin is weakened by the power of grace, though not totally subdued : Gal. v. 17, ‘Ye cannot do the things ye would.’ They are not so active in sin, nor delighted in it ; sin dieth when the love of it dieth, and the pleasure of it is gone. Now the love of sin is weakened in their hearts ; they hate it, though sometimes they fall into it : Rom. vii. 15, ‘What I hate that I do ;’ it is enabling a christian to die to sin and the world every day.

[4.] Christ hath undertaken to subdue it wholly in them ; and at length the soul shall be without spot, blemish, or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. We and corruption die together ; when Christ removeth the veil of the flesh, and taketh home the soul to heaven, it is without spot ; the glorified saints have not one fleshly thought or carnal motion, but are wholly swallowed up in the love of God. Therefore let Christ alone with his work ; he will not cease till sin be wholly abolished. The foolish builder began, but was not able to make an end. It cannot be said so of our Redeemer ; ‘He that hath begun a good work will perfect it,’ Phil. i. 6 ; and 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, ‘The very God of peace sanctify you wholly : and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ When we come to heaven we shall not complain of hard hearts, or carnal affections, or unruly desires ; as Naomi said to Ruth, ‘Sit still, my daughter ; the man will not rest till he have finished.’ This thing, God’s work, now is but half done ; continue with patience in well-doing, and in time it will come to perfection ; Christ will not cease till all be done.

4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die unto sin and the world.

[1.] This was Christ’s end. He died not only to expiate the guilt of sin, but also to take away its strength and power, 1 John iii. 8, that the interest of the devil may be destroyed in us, and the interest of God set up with more glory and triumph. Now shall we make void the end of Christ’s death, and go about to frustrate his intention, which was to oppose, weaken, and resist sin ? shall we cherish that which he came to destroy ? God forbid. There are some that abuse the death and merits of Christ for a quite contrary end than he intended, namely, to feed lusts, not to suppress them ; Christ died for sinners, they say, and they resolve to be sinners still ; these crucify Christ afresh, Heb. vi. 6 ; they are not crucified with him, that was his end. Nothing maketh the devil such a triumph, as when he supposeth God is beaten with his own weapon ; and that which should prove the destruction of sin proveth the great promotion of it, and the great hindrance of Christ and the gospel, when poison is conveyed by this perfume. The apostle never mentioneth this abuse of grace without abhorrence : Rom. vi. 1, ‘Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ? μὴ γένοιτο ;’ and, Rom. vi. 15, ‘Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace ? μὴ γένοιτο :’ and Gal. ii. 17, ‘Shall I make Christ the minister of sin ? μὴ γένοιτο ;’ *absit a vobis haec cogitatio*, Calvin. Christians should abominate the thought of it, as blasphemy and absurd. But again others reflect upon Christ’s death only for the comfort of it ; that is but half the

end ; you should prize the virtue, as well as the comfort. Paul desired not his righteousness only, but his power, Phil. iii. 9, 10. Lusts trouble us as much as guilty fears. This being Christ's end, we should comply with it. Paul gloried in the cross, as by it crucified to the world, Gal. vi. 14.

[2.] By way of representation, the death and agonies of Christ do set forth the heinousness and hatefulness of sin. It is the best glass to discover it to us ; in its own colours it smileth upon the soul with a pleasing aspect ; but if you would know the right complexion of it, go to Golgotha, and as you like the agonies of the garden, and the sorrows of his cross, so you may continue your dalliance with sin, and indulgence to carnal pleasures. It is a sport to us to do evil, but it was no sport to Christ to suffer for it, it made his soul heavy unto death. Never believe the enticing blandishments whereby it would inveigle you ; think of the drops of blood, the tears and fears and strong cries of Jesus Christ, the rending of the rocks, the darkening of the sun, the frowns of an angry God, Christ's desertion, the burden he felt when he bore our sins. Christ was the Son of God, knew his sufferings short, and a prospect of the glory which was to ensue, had no inherent guilt, knew not what it was to commit sin. 'He knew no sin,' 2 Cor. iv. 21, though he knew what it was to suffer for sin. Cast in the dear affection that was between God and Christ, and it will make you tremble, to consider what he endured ; 'it pleased the Father to bruise him.' Oh ! know what an evil and bitter thing it is, what it will bring upon you, if you allow it.

[3.] It worketh on love. It should make sin hateful, to consider what it did to Christ, our dearest Lord and Redeemer. Surely we should not think it fit to go on in that course which brought such sufferings upon Christ. By his love manifested in his sufferings, he hath powerfully constrained us, not to take pleasure in what put him to such pain and grief. We gush at the sight of one that hath murdered a friend of ours. When the prophet saw Hazael, he wept, and said, Thou art the murderer. We hate the Jews, and detest the memory of Judas ; the worst enemy is in our own bosoms ; it is sin hath slain the Lord of glory ; the Jews were the instruments, but sin was the meritorious cause. In this sense we made him serve with our sins, Isa. xlivi. 24.

[4.] By way of merit. Christ shed his blood not only to redeem us from the displeasure of God and the rigour of the law, but from all iniquity, Titus ii. 14 ; from a vain conversation, 1 Peter i. 18 ; from this present evil world, Gal. i. 4. Our dying to sin is a part of Christ's purchase, as well as pardon ; he purchased a virtue and a power to mortify sin, bought sanctification as well as other privileges, paid down a full price to provoked justice, to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and that the word and sacraments might be sanctified to convey and apply this grace to us, Eph. v. 26, that we might be encouraged.

[5.] By way of pattern. Christ hath taught us how to die to sin by the example of his own death, that is, he denied himself for us, that we might deny ourselves for him, and suffered pain for us, that we might the more willingly digest the trouble of mortification.

When Christ pleased not himself, will you make it your business to please the flesh and gratify the flesh? When he loved you, and gave himself for you, will not you give up your lusts, which are not worth the keeping? It is true our sinful nature is not extinguished without grief, and pain, and trouble; but was not Christ's death a death of sorrow and trouble, of all deaths most painful and shameful? Shall we wallow in fleshly delights, when Christ was a man of sorrows? The world must be crucified, Gal. vi. 14; and the flesh crucified, Gal. v. 24—that is, it is to be put to death. It implieth crucifixion with grief and shame; as sin is rooted in self-love, and a love of pleasure, so it must be mortified by self-denial and godly sorrow. If nature shrink and cannot brook this discipline, remember Christ's agonies.

Use 1. To press us to make use of Christ's death for the mortifying of sin. It is useful two ways especially.

1. By way of obligation and engagement. As Christ dying bound all those that profess union with him to die also; to die to sin, as he died for sin; which obligation we consented to in baptism; therefore unless we mean to disclaim all union with Christ, to rescind and disannul our baptismal vow, or make it a mere mockery, we are strongly engaged to oppose, resist, and set about the mortification of sin, in which the spectacle of Christ's hanging and dying upon a cross will be a great help to us, and his love showed therein strengthen the obligation, and his self-denial and not pleasing himself, a notable pattern for us to write after him. Christ undertook that serious worshippers should serve him; it was a part of his stipulation on the cross. We that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, consented to his engagement, and count ourselves dead in his death; therefore we should cast away sin with indignation: Hos. xiv. 8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' But because it is not done in act, as soon as it is done in vow and resolution, therefore let us every day grow more sensible of the evil of it, Jer. xxxi. 18; more careful to eschew the occasions of it: Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes,' Let us use all the means which tend to the subduing of it by prayer. 'For this I sought the Lord thrice,' 2 Cor. xii. 8; and, Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify your members which are upon earth.' Let us weaken the root of it, which is an inordinate love of the world, and hear the word with this end, that sin may be laid aside, and we grow in mortification, as well as vivification, 1 Peter ii. 1, 2. Let us deal with it as the Jews served Christ, and let this be our daily task.

2. By way of encouragement. Depend on the virtue and grace purchased by his blood and sufferings. There is a double encouragement in this work.

[1.] Because of the great virtue purchased; and strength and assistance vouchsafed: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.'

[2.] The certainty of the event. It is secured to the serious christian, and therefore the scripture speaketh of it as done already: 'We are dead, your old man is crucified with Christ.' 'I am crucified with Christ,' which giveth great strength and courage in our conflicts with sin; we may triumph before the victory.

SERMON XXIX.

But to him that died, and rose again.—2 COR. v. 15.

FROM these words we have the second fruit of Christ's death and purchase, he died that we might die in conformity unto his death, and he died that we might live with a respect to his resurrection ; and therefore, as I have spoken of our dying by the death of Christ, so must I speak now of our living in the life and in the resurrection of Christ. His death is the merit of it, but his resurrection is the pattern and fountain of it. His death is the merit of it, for it is repeated here again. He did not only die that we might die, but he died that we might live—‘He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves,’ &c. But then his resurrection is the pattern and the fountain of it; for therefore is the clause inserted, ‘That they might live to him that died for them, and rose again.’

Now in this verse there are two things.

1. The fruit itself—the new life, with respect to the resurrection of Christ : *And he died for all, that they might live.*

2. The aim, tendency, and ordination of that life, which is to refer all our actions to God's glory, and to guide them by God's will : *That they should from henceforth live not to themselves, &c.*

Now this end, aim, and tendency of the new life, it is propounded negatively : ‘Not unto themselves.’ This is mentioned because a man cannot live to God till he hath denied himself. Spiritual life is but a recovery out of self-love. Before the fall there was no such thing as self, contrary to, or distinct from God, set up either in an opposite or divided sense from God ; but when man fell from God, self interposed as the next heir, as an idol, not God ; therefore the great work and care of religion is to draw us from self to God. ‘Not to themselves,’ that is, not to their own wills, ends, and interests. But it is positively expressed too, that they should live according to the will, and for the glory of God.

For the first of these, the fruit itself. I shall speak of the life itself, that we have by virtue of Christ's resurrection ; ‘That they which live,’ that is, spiritually. Some, indeed, expound it judicially ; they that live in a law sense, they are freed from death, to which they were obliged by Adam, and which they deserved by the merit of their own sins. But though that be included, it is not the full and formal meaning of the clause ; for as the death mentioned in the former verse is to be interpreted of the mystical death, so by consequence this living is to be interpreted of the spiritual life, by bestowing of the Holy Ghost upon us. Of this I shall speak under this point, namely,—

Doct. That by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection christians obtain the grace of a new life.

In opening of this, I shall—

1. Show that there is a spiritual life, and what it is.
2. The respect that it hath to the resurrection of Christ, as the spiritual death hath to his death.

First, That there is a spiritual life. There is a natural and human

life, and there is a spiritual and heavenly life. The natural and human life is nothing but the civil and orderly use of sense and reason; and there is a spiritual and heavenly life, which is nothing but supernatural grace, framing and disposing the whole man to live unto God. It is supernatural grace, because we have it by virtue of our union with Christ: John vi. 57, 'As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.' Mark, when we have eaten Christ, when we are united to Christ (that is, take it out of the metaphor), as our food becomes one with our substance; so when we are united to Christ so as to become one spirit, then we live by the influence and virtue of his Spirit. In the life of nature we live by the influence of his general providence, but in the life of grace by the power of the Holy Ghost; therefore it is called, 'The life of God,' Eph. iv. 18: 'Being alienated from the life of God;' that is to say, that life which God worketh in us by the communication of his Spirit. Now by this supernatural grace, this gift of the Spirit, we are framed to live unto God. For this life, as it hath another principle distinct from that of the natural life, so it hath another end; the operations of the creature are sublimated and raised to a higher end. Here, in the text, the apostle shows 'the ordination and tendency of this life, that it is 'not to ourselves,' but it is 'to him that died for us, and rose again'; and Gal. ii. 19, 'I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' It is a life whereby a man is enabled to act and move towards God, and for God, as his utmost end and his chief good. The natural life is to itself, as water riseth not beyond its fountain; and that which is born of the flesh can go no higher than as fleshly inclinations carry it. But the spiritual life is a power enabling us to live unto God: Rom. xiv. 8, 'Whether we live we live unto God,' &c. When we only mind self-interest, and act for the conveniences, and interests, and supports of the outward life, then we do but 'walk as men,' 1 Cor. iii. 3; this is, but according to the motions and to the bent of a natural principle. But if we would live as christians, or as new men, then we must live at a higher rate; God must be at the end of every action. Thus you see what it is.

Now because of the term *life*, I shall show—

1. The correspondence,
2. The difference, between it and the common life.

1. The correspondence and likeness that is between the common life that other men live and this life of grace, that Christ died for us that we might live, and is wrought in us in conformity to his resurrection, for therefore they go under the same name. They are alike in many things.

[1.] The natural life supposes generation, so does the spiritual, which is therefore expressed by regeneration, or by being 'born again,' John iii. 3, and 1 John ii. 27. Now look, as in natural generation we are first begotten and then born, so here there is an act *qua regeneramur*, by which we are begotten again, and *qua renascimur*, by which we are born again. There is an act of God, by which we are begotten again—viz., by the powerful influence of grace upon our hearts; accompanying the word, James i. 18; and there is an act of God, by which we are born again—viz., when the new creature is formed in us, and begins to discover itself—'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.' Effectual calling and sanctification are

these two acts ; by the one we are begotten, by the other born ; the one may be called our passive, the other our active regeneration. And as in generation, that which begets produces the same life that is in himself—a beast communicates the life of a beast, and a man of a man ; so it is the life of God that we receive when we are formed for his use by the power of his grace. It is called the life of God and the divine nature, spiritual qualities being infused, whereby we resemble God. And herein, again, it agrees with common life. Life consists in the union of the matter with the principle of life ; as when there is union between the body and soul, then there is life, without which the body is but a dead and an inactive lump. As Adam's body, when it was organised and framed, until God infused the breath of life in it, lay as a dead lump ; so this life is begun by a union between us and Christ : he lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith, Gal. ii. 20. The Spirit is the principle of life, and faith is the means to receive it ; and therefore we are said, Rom. vi. 5, 'to be planted into the likeness of Christ's resurrection.' Planting notes a union ; as a bud that is put into a stock becomes one with the stock, and bears fruit by virtue of the life of the stock ; we no sooner are planted into Christ but we feel the power of his life and virtue of his resurrection ; he begins to live in us, and we in him, as the graft in the stock, and as the stock in the graft.

[2.] Where there is life, there is sense and feeling, especially if wrong and violence be offered to it. A living member is sensible of the smallest prick and pain ; and so is the spiritual life bewrayed by the tenderness of the heart, and the sense that we have of the interest of God. Stupid and insensible spirits show they have no life ; and therefore those that are 'alienated from the life of God,' are said to be 'past feeling,' Eph. iv. 18, 19. As long as there is life there is feeling. We may lose other senses, yet there may be life. The eye may be closed up, and sight lost ; and the ear may be deaf, and lose its use, but yet life may remain still. But feeling is dispersed throughout the whole body, and we do not lose our feeling till we are quite dead ; therefore this is the character of them that are alienated from the life of God, that they have no feeling. Now the children of God, the regenerate, are sensible of the injuries done to the spiritual life by sin, and of the decays of that life they have, and of the comforts of it. What consciences have they that can live in carnal pleasures, and sin freely in thought, and foully in act, and yet never groan under it, never be sensible of it ? Paul was sensible of the first stirrings and risings of sin : Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ?' Now where there is no sense of this, it shows such have no life, who are neither sensible of the injuries done to the life they have, nor of the decays of it by God's absence. When the bridegroom is gone, sensible hearts will mourn, Mat. ix. 15 ; when they have lost Christ, when they feel any abatements of the influences of his grace. Carnal men that sleep in their filthiness, have no sense of God's favours or frowns, of his absence or presence, because they are quite dead ; they do not take notice of God's dealings with them either in mercy or judgment, therefore are touched with no remorse for the one or thankfulness for the other, but are careless and stupid,

and past feeling. And can a man be alive and not feel it? And can you have the life of grace, and not feel the decays and interruptions of it, and neither be sensible of comforts or injuries?

[3.] Where there is life there is an appetite joined with it, an earnest desire after that which may feed, maintain, and support this life. What makes the brute-creatures to run to the teats of the dam as soon as they are born, but instinct of nature? Appetite is the immediate effect of life. Where there is life it must have some supports; it hath its tastes and relishes; as 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' I say, where there is a new birth there will be an appetite after spiritual unmixed milk. The new nature hath its proper supports; and there will be something relished and savoured besides meats, drinks, and bodily pleasures, and such things as gratify the animal life. As Jesus Christ said, John iv. 32, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of;' so spiritual life hath inward consolations, it hath hidden manna, whereby it is supported and maintained—'Meat that perisheth not,' John vi. 27. Painted fire needs no fuel; those that do not live they have no appetite, there is no need of nourishment. But where there is life there will be a desire, an appetite that carrieth us to that which is food to the soul, to Christ Jesus especially, and to the ordinances in which he is exhibited to us. And therefore, where there is no desire to meet with God in these ordinances, where Christ may be food to our souls, it is to be feared there is no life. Wicked men may desire ordinances sometimes, but not to strengthen the spiritual life, but out of carnal ends and reasons. They are loth to be left out of the worship that is in esteem in the place where they live; as the Pharisees submitted to John's baptism, though they hated the Lord Christ; it was then in esteem; therefore he calls them 'a generation of vipers,' Mat. iii. 7. And partly because they trust in the work wrought. There is somewhat to pacify natural conscience by the bare external performance of a duty; and carnal men rest in the sacraments or visible ordinances. It is natural to us to be led by sensible things; and the external action being easy, they choke their consciences with these things. How usual is it in this sense to see many that tear the bond, yet prize the seal: that is to say, they contemn the bond of the covenant, and the duty of the covenant, yet dote upon the Lord's supper, which is a seal of it. But a true appetite desires these ordinances, that we may meet with God in them. This is a sign of life.

[4.] Where there is life there will be growth; especially in vegetables, there life is always growing and increasing till they come to their full stature; so do the children of God grow in grace. Our Lord himself, though he had the Spirit without measure, yet 'he grew in wisdom and favour with God,' Luke ii. 40; not in show, but in reality; he grew in wisdom as he grew in stature. Though his human nature in his infancy was taken into the unity of his divine person, yet the capacity of his human nature was enlarged by degrees, for his human nature was still to carry a proportion with ours; and therefore he grew in wisdom and in favour with God. And so all that are Christ's, they grow. 'The trees planted in the courts of God flourish there,' Ps. xcii. 13. There is more room made for the new nature by degrees to exert and put forth itself. Corruption is still a-dying, and they grow more

humble, more holy, more solid, more rational, more wise in the spiritual life, more resolved for God, more heavenly-minded, that they may be at more liberty for God. They may lose somewhat in liveliness of gifts and vigour of affections (for these things come and go), but they are more spiritual, and more steadfast, and more solid, and seriously set to seek after God; as an old tree, that puts forth fewer leaves and blossoms, but is more deeply rooted. But now hypocrites do not grow beyond their first blaze; yea, they wither every day, lose their zeal and their forwardness, out of carnal ease or affection to pleasures, honours, or greatness of the world; they lose the seeming grace that they had before.

[5.] Where there is life there are vital operations, for life is active and stirring. So spiritual life hath its operations; it cannot well be hid, it will bewray itself in a zealous and in a constant and uniform practice of godliness. They are idols that have feet, and walk not: Rev. iii. 1, Some only 'have a name to live, and are dead.' They that make a naked profession, but are not excited to live, and bring forth fruit to God, 'they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof;' 2 Tim. iii. 5, that is, the power that should change their hearts, and direct and order all their actions. They that are governed by the Spirit, they feel this power; they are enabled to bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Look, as a worldly man, by virtue of the worldly spirit that is in him, is dexterous in all his affairs—his worldly principle puts a life into him, Luke xvi. 9; their employment is suitable to their life; so a spiritual man, that hath not the spirit of the world, or a disposition that makes him eager upon worldly things, but the Spirit of God dwelling and working in him, here is not the sphere of his activity; his cares, thoughts, and endeavours are turned into another channel; he is quickened and raised to newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. The man is more earnest, more thoroughly set for heaven, and the worldly life is more overruled and mastered in him, and the heavenly and divine life prevails in him, and sets him a-work more and more. Thus I have, by comparing these two lives, a little showed you what is that life that we have by Christ; it is a life that flows from regeneration; that is begun by union with Christ; that begets a sense, so that a christian feels the annoyances of those things that are inconvenient and contrary to this life; and begets an appetite after the supports that should maintain it, and discovers itself by growth; this life is increased in them more and more; and also it discovers itself by its activity; by making them fruitful towards God. Thus you see wherein they agree.

2. Let us a little see wherein they differ.

[1.] They differ in the state of them both; for this spiritual life is a life that is consistent with some degree of death. Even then when we live, we are troubled with a body of death. Paul complains of it, though grace hath the upper hand in the soul, yet corruption cleaves to us still. Outwardly a man cannot be said to be dead and alive together; but a christian yet hath sin dwelling in him, and is dying to sin every day, that he may live unto God. And as sin decays, so the spiritual life takes place; for mortification makes way for vivification; and according to the degrees of the one, so are the degrees of the other. The more we die to sin, the more we are alive to righteousness, 1 Peter ii. 24.

[2.] There is a difference in the dignity of this life. Natural life, what is it? A benefit vouchsafed to us by God, that we may have time for repentance; but yet it is but a 'wind' that is soon blown over, and passeth away, Job vii. 7; and a suitable expression you have, James iv. 14, for this life is but as a 'vapour.' This life is a little warm breath turned in and out by the nostrils, soon gone. It is indeed a continued sickness; and our food is as it were constant medicine to repair and remedy the decays of the natural life. Oh, but this is a life that flows from God himself, and is a more worthy thing, it is the life of God; and as Christ liveth in the Father, so we in him by the Spirit. This was a life bought at a dearer rate than the life of nature: John vi. 51, 'My flesh which I give for the life of the world.' Nothing less than the death of the Son of God would serve the turn; and therefore it is more noble than the other life, which is called 'the life of our hands,' Isa. lvii. 10, because it costs us hard labour to maintain it.

[3.] As it differs in the dignity and value, so in the original. The natural life is traduced and brought down unto us by many successions of generations from the 'first Adam'; he was 'a living soul,' but the 'last Adam was a quickening spirit,' 1 Cor. xv. 45. We have a living soul by virtue of our descending from the first Adam; all that our parents could do was to make way for the union of soul and body together. But by this life we and Christ are united together, and he becomes a life-making spirit unto us.

[4.] There is a difference in the duration. Grace is an immortal flame, a spark that cannot be quenched. All our labour and toil here in the world is to maintain a dying life, a lamp that soon goes out, or to prop up a tabernacle that is always falling; when we have made the best provision for it, it is taken away—'Thou fool, this night,' &c. This life is in the power of every ruffian and assassinate that values not his own. Oh, but the spiritual life is a life that begins in grace and ends in glory; the foundation of it was laid in justification, that took off the sentence of death; sanctification is the beginning of it, the which by degrees is carried on till it end in glory, where we shall be never weary of living it. The outward life, though short, yet we soon grow weary of it; the shortest life is long enough to be numbered with a thousand miseries. If we live to old age, age is a burthen to itself, Eccles. xii. 1. Life itself may become a burthen, for some have wished and requested for themselves that they might die. But no man ever wished for the end of this spiritual life. Who ever cursed the day of his new birth? This is life indeed; then we begin to live in good earnest, we may reckon from that day forward that we live. The seed of eternal life was laid as soon as grace was infused into the soul, and you may 'take hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. iv. 20, before you enter into it. Maintain this life, and it will end in eternal glory. Thus I have despatched my first question, namely, What is this life that Christ hath purchased for us? A spiritual death, that we might die to sin, and also a spiritual life, that we might live unto God.

Secondly. We come to speak of the respect that is between this life and Christ's resurrection.

I Answer, Christ's resurrection is—(1.) An example and pattern of it; (2.) a pledge of it; (3.) a cause of it.

1. An example of it. There is great likeness and correspondence between Christ's rising from the grave, and a christian's resurrection from the death of sin.

[1.] Christ died before he rose, and usually God killeth us before he maketh us alive. First we find the word a killing letter before we find it a word of life. This is God's method. Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9, 'The commandment came, and sin revived, and I died.' A man is broken in heart with an apprehension of sin and God's eternal wrath, before he is made alive by Christ: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' He must be himself a dead man. The law must do the law work before the gospel doth the gospel work; so Rom. viii. 2, 'But the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' He is under the law of death and sin, as it convinceth of sin and bindeth over to death.

[2.] The same Spirit of holiness, or power of God, that quickened Christ, quickeneth us. It is said, Rom. vi. 4, 'That as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so should we be raised to newness of life;' that is, by his glorious power: 2 Cor. xiii. 4, 'For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.' What is there said to be done by the power of God is said elsewhere to be done by the Spirit of sanctification: Rom. i. 4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' So are believers quickened by the same Spirit: Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Christ will quicken us by his grace, as he did his own dead body. The same quickening Spirit that is in Jesus Christ doth also quicken us.

[3.] Again; Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; as the apostle telleth you: Rom. vi. 9, 'Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.' His resurrection instated him in an eternal life, never more to come under the power of death again. He might have been said to be alive after death if he had performed but one single act of life, or lived only for a while; but he rose to an immortal, endless life, a life co-eternal with the Father. So is a christian put into an unchangeable state: sin hath no more dominion over him,—should not, shall not, as the apostle proveth there, applying it to the christian. When Christ telleth he is the resurrection and the life, he asserts two things: John xi. 25, 26, 'That he that believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and shall never die!' Though formerly dead in sin, he shall live the life of grace, and when he liveth it once, shall never die spiritually and eternally; otherwise how shall we make good Christ's speech?

Christ, in that he liveth, he liveth with God, and liveth unto God, Rom. vi 10, that is, with God, at his right hand; and to God, that is, referring all things to his glory; for, Phil. ii. 10, 11, all that Jesus Christ doth as mediator is to the glory of God the Father. So a christian liveth with God and unto God; with God, not at his right hand now, but yet in a state of communion with him: 1 John i. 3.

'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.' And he liveth to God, as in the text—'Not to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again ;' that is, no longer to our own lusts and desires, nor for our own ease, profit and honour, but according to the will and for the service and honour of God; as more fully hereafter. Well then, that new state, into which Christ was inaugurated at his resurrection, is a pattern and example of our new spiritual life.

2. How it is a pledge of it. Christ was our common person, and we make one mystical body with him ; and therefore his resurrection and life was not for his own person and single self alone, but for all those that have interest in him. As he died, so he rose again in our name and in our stead, as one that had satisfied the justice of God, and procured all manner of grace for us, and as a conqueror over all our spiritual enemies. And therefore he is called the first-fruits from the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 20 : as a little handful of the first-fruits blessed the whole harvest, and sanctified it unto God ; it blessed not the darnel and the cockle, but blessed and sanctified the corn. Christ's quickening after death was a sure pledge that every one who in time belongeth to him shall in his time be quickened also ; first Christ, and then they that are Christ's, every one in their own order. We must not think that when Christ was raised it was no more than if Lazarus or any other single person was raised. No ; his resurrection was in our name ; therefore we are said to be raised with Christ, Col. iii. 1 ; and not only so, but quickened together with Christ, Col. ii. 13, and Eph. ii. 4, 5. Though we were quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection, yet then was the pledge of it. It was agreed between God and Christ that his resurrection should be in effect ours, and in the moment of our regeneration the virtue of it should be communicated to us. The right was before faith to all the elect ; but when faith is wrought, the right is applied by virtue of the covenant of redemption. He rose in the name of all the redeemed, and they are counted to rise in him, and we are actually instated in this benefit, when converted to God.

3. It is a cause of it. That Spirit of power by which Christ was raised out of the grave, is the very efficient cause of our being raised and quickened, or of our new birth ; for the virtue purchased by Christ's death is then applied to us by him who is now alive, and liveth for evermore for that end and purpose. Therefore it is said, 1 Peter i. 3, 'That God hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ'—by virtue of that power which he now hath, as risen from the dead ; and Eph i. 19, 20, 'And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places.' The same power worketh in believers, which wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. The same power which wrought in and towards Christ's exaltation, is engaged for believers to work grace, and carry on the work of grace in them. Christ risen and living in heaven is the fountain of life in all new creatures. He is the great receptacle of grace, and sendeth it out by his Spirit,—a vital influence to all such as belong to him. And there-

fore our life is made dependent upon his : John xiv. 19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' The life of believers is derived from Christ's life, who is our quickening head, communicating virtue to all his members. There is a virtue in his life to quicken us ; so that we do not live so much as Christ liveth in us : Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ;' as the root in the branches, and the head in the members.

Use 1. Information. It teacheth us three things in point of use.

1. The suitableness between Christ and believers. Consider him as God, or mediator. As God, Christ hath life communicated to him by eternal generation ; so by regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature. As mediator, he subsists in his life as man, by virtue of the personal union with the Godhead. So do we live by virtue of the mystical inhabitation or union with Christ by his Spirit ; for our spiritual life floweth from the gracious presence of God in us by his Spirit. Christ as man had first a frail life, subject to hunger, cold, and sufferings ; so have believers a spiritual life, consistent with many weaknesses and infirmities. But now Christ liveth gloriously at the Father's right hand ; so we shall one day bear the image of the heavenly, and be one day freed from all weaknesses. Thus are we conformed unto Christ, and partake of the same life he doth.

2. It informeth us in what way this life is conveyed and continued to us. By virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by the Spirit through faith ; his death is at the bottom of it, for he died that we should live together with him ; 1 Thes. vi. 10, 'Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' His resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and cause of it ; for, Rom. vi. 10, 'If we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' After he had rescued us from the power and danger of our sins by his rising from the dead, he is in a greater capacity to send out that Spirit by which he was raised to raise us up to a new life. Then the Spirit is the immediate worker of it, for Christ maketh his first entry, and dwelleth in the hearts of believers, by his Spirit ; for we are renewed and born again by the Spirit : John iii. 5. 'That which is born of flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' without which we are not capable of it. The Spirit worketh faith, and then there is a habitation fit for Christ in the soul : Eph. iii. 17, 'That he may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Then he liveth in us, as the head in the members, Col. ii. 19 ; and the root in the branches, John xv. 1. It is by faith that the union is completed : John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' And then a virtue and power floweth from this union, to enable us to do those things which are spiritually good and acceptable to God, which is nothing but that which we call life. Without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5 ; with him, and by him, all things : Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,'—namely by the influence of his Spirit received by faith.

3. It informeth us, it is not enough to believe that Christ died for you, unless also you permit Christ to live in you. It is not enough

for your faith, it is not enough for your love; the apostle mentions both, and we must look after both. As to have our old offences expiated, so to live a new life in Christ: Rom. vi. 5, ‘For if we have been planted together into the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.’ We are branches of that tree whereof Christ is the root. We must have communion with Christ living, as well as with Christ dying, and not only freed from the damning power of sin, but quickened to a new life.

Use 2. Is exhortation; to press you to several duties.

1. To believe that there is such a life. It is matter of faith; for when Christ had said, John xi. 26, ‘Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die,’ he presently addeth, ‘Believest thou this?’ Few mind and regard it. The general faith concerning life by Christ must go before the special application. Besides, it is a hidden thing: ‘your life is hidden with Christ in God,’ Col. iii. 3. It is not visible to sense; and invisible things are only seen by faith. It is hidden from sense, and therefore it must be believed. It is hidden from the carnal world, as colours are from a blind man, because they have no eyes to see it. The natural man cannot see things that must be spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Besides, the spiritual life is hidden under the natural: Gal. ii. 20, ‘The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.’ They live in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing else but the natural life sublimated and overruled to higher and nobler ends. Spiritual men eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and marry, and give in marriage, as others do, for they have not divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood; but all these things are governed by grace, and are carried on to holy and eternal ends. Besides, it is hidden, because there is upon it the veil and covering of afflictions and outward meanness and abasement; as it was said of some, ‘of whom the world was not worthy, that they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins,’ Heb. xi. 37, 38. Who would think so much worth should lie under such a base outside? Their glory is darkened and obscured by their condition. Besides, too, this life is often hidden by reproaches, and censures, and calumnies. The people of God are represented as strange sort of people unto the world: 2 Cor. vi. 8, ‘As deceivers, and yet true.’ They are reputed as a company of hypocrites and dissemblers; all their experiences questioned and scoffed at. Profane and wanton wits will be spitting out their venom in every age, and God’s people will be judged according to men in the flesh, though they live to God in the spirit, 1 Peter iv. 6. God permitteth it; reproach is the soil and dung whereby he maketh his heritage fruitful. But yet this is a hiding and disguising the spiritual life. Lastly, it is hidden under manifold weaknesses and infirmities. The best have their blemishes, and the most of christians show forth too much of Adam and too little of Jesus; and so the spiritual life is carried on darkly, and in a riddle. Though the old man of corruption doth not bear sway in their hearts, to command, direct, and order all their actions, as formerly it did, yet sin is not wholly gone; they feel a law warring in their members, Rom. vii. 33. And it is not only warring, but sometimes prevailing,

that they themselves can feel little of the holy life. There are some question the life of grace, others scorn and scoff at it. Yet believe it, for it is the great truth revealed in the scriptures, and it is in some measure felt by sense; yea, the rays of this hidden and rejected life are often discovered to the world. For there are some who by their practices condemn the world, live in counter-motion to the corrupt sort of men, walk as those that have another spirit than the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. ii. 12, and as those that look for a happiness elsewhere. Therefore believe that there is such a life.

2. Value and esteem it according to its worth and excellency; I mean, with a practical esteem, as Paul doth, counting all things but dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. What would he know in him? Phil. iii. 10, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection;' or the virtue of raising him out of sin to the life of grace. Oh! that is an excellent thing indeed. It is more to be advanced to this life than to the highest honour in the world. This is to live in God, to God; to have miracles of grace wrought in us every day. It is the divine power that giveth us 'all things that pertain to life and godliness,' 2 Peter i. 3; not begun nor carried on without a daily miracle, or a work exceeding the power of nature or the force of the creature. Life ennobleth all things: a living dog is better than a dead lion; to be alive to God, when others are dead in sin, what a great privilege is that?

3. Deal with Christ about it. Come to him, he purchased it by his death: John vi. 51, 'This is my flesh, which I have given for the life of the world'—to God in sacrifice, to us for food. Look upon him as one that is possessed of the fulness of the Spirit, to work it in all those that come to God by him: Heb. vii. 25, 'He is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, for he liveth for ever to make intercession for them;' that is, penitent believers, for by faith and repentance we come to God by Christ. He is angry that we will not come to him for this benefit: John v. 40, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.' If you have a pressing need, why should you keep away from him? That is his quarrel against us, that we will not make use of him for this benefit. He is best pleased when we have most of it: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.' He would have us not only living christians, but lively. He hath appointed ordinances to convey it to us. The word: Isa. lv. 3, 'Hear, and your souls shall live.' The sacraments: Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.' Prayer: that we cry earnestly, and express our desires of this benefit: Ps. xxxvi. 9, 'For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.' David often called upon God as the God of his life. Well, when we go to God, he remitteth us to Christ, Christ to the Spirit, and the Spirit to the ordinances; there we should observe his drawings, and obey his sanctifying motions, when he saith, 'Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' Eph. v. 14. When more awakened than at another time.

4. When we have this life, let us improve it, and act grace in all holy obedience unto God: Eph. v. 25, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us

walk in the Spirit.' If partakers of the new life of grace, we must show it in our conversations, for newness of heart is seen in newness of life.

Use 3 is to put us upon self-reflection and self-examination. Have we a new life communicated to us?

1. If it be so, then there is a great change wrought in us. It is said of Christ, 'he was dead, and is alive,' Rev. i. 18. To him we are conformed: Luke xv. 24, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found;' so Eph. ii. 1, 'You that were sometimes dead in trespasses and sins, yet now hath he quickened.' Surely when a man is translated from death to life, that should be a sensible change, as if another soul dwelt in the same body; he is another man to God, hath holy breathings after him, delights frequently to converse with him in prayer: Acts ix. 11, 'Arise, and go into the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth;' and Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication.' He hath a childlike love to God as a father: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father.' Have a childlike reverence to him: Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye followers of God, as dear children.' Illustrate it by that, Jer. xxxv. 6, when they set pots of wine before them to drink, 'We dare not; Jonadab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine.' And a childlike dependence upon him: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' A childlike hope from him: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Zeal for him: 2 Cor. v. 10, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' He is another man to his neighbour; he carrieth it justly and righteously to all, both as to person, name, and estate; and this not by compulsion of conscience, but inclination of heart, which the scripture expresseth by loving our neighbour as ourselves, seeking their good as our own, rejoicing in their good as our own, mourning for their evil as our own. Such a justice as groweth out of love: Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' But to our fellow-saints and everlasting companions a Christ-like love: 2 Pet. i. 7, 'Add to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.' Another man in his special relations: Philem. 11, 'Which in times past was unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me.' That is the sphere of our activity. In the government of himself he doth exercise a greater command over his passions and affections: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof;' alloweth no bosom sin: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was upright before thee, and kept myself from mine iniquity;' and still a constant carefulness to please God: Heb. xiii. 18, 'For we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.'

2. If so, there will be a solemn dedication of ourselves to God: Rom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead.' The reason is, because the great effect of grace is a tendency towards God, and that tendency produceth a setting apart of

ourselves for God's use and service ; and the reality of this is seen in using ourselves for God.

3. Where there is life there will be vital operations. For life is active and stirring ; it cannot be hidden, but will bewray itself in all that we do, though not at all times in a like measure. Our prayers will be the prayers of a living man ; our conferences and discourses such as come from those that have life in them ; our whole service of God such as hath warmth and zeal in it : James v. 16, 'The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man ;' and Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ;' our addresses to God, such as become feeling of wants, an appetite after and savour of spiritual things. And if christians do not feel this life (for sometimes it is weak and obstructed), they cannot be satisfied, nor rest in this frame. When dull of hearing, or cold in prayer, they rouse up and stir up themselves : Isa. Ixiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' What is wanting in fervour is made up in sense and feeling and bemoaning their condition ; so that the heart is alive, because it is sensible of its deadness, living though not lively. But the chief note is a sincere desire to please, honour, and glorify God ; and that by virtue of Christ's resurrection christians obtain the grace of a new life.

SERMON XXX.

That they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.—2 Cor. v. 15.

WE are still upon the second fruit of Christ's purchase—he died that we might die in a conformity to his death, and he died that we might live with a respect to his resurrection. His death is the merit of it, but his resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and fountain of this new life. I propounded to speak—

1. Of the fruit itself ; the grace of the new life wrought in us, in conformity to Christ's resurrection.

2. The aim and tendency of that life ; which is to refer all our actions to God, 'that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.' The aim is propounded—

[1.] Negatively—*Not to themselves.*

[2.] Affirmatively—*But to him that died for them, and rose again.*

[1.] Negatively—'Not to themselves:' to their own ease, honour, and profit, their own wills, own interests, and own ends.

[2.] Positively—'To him:' according to his will, for his honour and glory.

Doct. The duty and property of the spiritual life is to refer all our actions, not to self, but to God.

1. For proof of the point, take one place for both : Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto God ; or whether we die, we die unto the

Lord ; for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' A christian is not his own man, and therefore liveth not to himself, but he is the Lord's in his person, all his relations, enjoyments, conditions, interests ; he is the Lord's by every kind of right and title, and hath not power over the least action that he doth, or comfort he enjoyeth : if health, wealth, uses it for God ; if children, loves them in order to God ; and therefore referreth all to God. In the text the apostle saith, None of us —none of those that are in Christ. The apostle speaketh of weak and strong christians, they all agree in this ; and he shrewdly implieth that he that liveth to himself is none of Christ's. Now—

[1.] Not to self, for self-denial is required as our first lesson : Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.' Christ telleth us the worst at first. So see how peremptory Christ is : Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' It is too late for the vote of man and foolish reason to interpose, out of hope to get this law repealed. No, it is unalterably stated that no interest of ours, no, not life itself, which maketh us capable of enjoying all other worldly interests, can be pleaded in bar to our duty, or by way of exception or reservation in our subjection to Christ. Now, if self must be denied, and all the interests of it renounced, certainly we must not live to ourselves. God taxeth his people for their self-seeking and self-aiming : Hos. x. 1, 'Israel is an empty vine, that bringeth forth fruit to himself ;' as a vine that only maketh a shift to live, and to draw sap to itself, but bringeth forth no fruit to the owner. Certainly, as in the spiritual we receive all from Christ, we use all for him ; as rivers run into the sea, from whence their channels are filled. They do not live *in* Christ that do not live *to* Christ. Visible, nominal christians are as the ivy that closeth about the bark, but bringeth forth no berries by virtue of its own root ; but these really engrafted into Christ do bring forth fruit to Christ.

[2.] To God : Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live to God.' There the apostle sheweth the ordination of the spiritual life. As soon as we are alive by grace, we are alive unto God, and the stream of our affections, respects, and endeavours, is turned into a new channel ; so Rom. vii. 4, 'Married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.' This 'unto God,' is explained, Col. i. 10, 'That we may walk worthy of God unto all pleasing ;' that is, agreeable to his will or word, wherein he hath declared his pleasure, and stated the rule of our actions. So 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.' That is the end and aim of all our actions, sacred or civil, spiritual or natural. God is the beginning, and must be the end of all things ; he is the absolute Lord, and the infinite and inestimable good, in the enjoyment of whom our happiness lieth.

I shall observe something from the text, and as the point is delivered in this place.

1. I observe, that this end of the new life is propounded disjunctively, for a man cannot do both : he cannot live to himself and God too. A man cannot live to God till he has denied himself. Before

the fall there was no such thing as self, opposite to God and separate from him. But when man forsook God as his chief good and last end, then self was set up as an idol in the place of God ; for, lay aside God, and self interposest as the next heir. And what kind of self do we set up but carnal self—the pleasing of the flesh, or the advancement of a kind of carnal felicity to ourselves, in opposition to God, and in disjunction from him ? Thence we are bidden to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, before we can give up ourselves to the service of God, Titus ii. 12. Mark the two things to be denied—‘ungodliness and worldly lust.’ For when we fall from God, we fall to the world, or some inferior good thing, wherewith we please the flesh, and so make the earthly life, and the pleasure we expect therein, to be our chief good and ultimate end, and bestow all our time and care upon it. Thence that dissuasive, Rom. xiii. 14, ‘Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.’ The unrenewed part of mankind do altogether spend their time in providing for the flesh, and seeking the happiness of the animal and earthly life, apart from God, or in opposition to him. Now this disposition must be mortified and cured before we can live unto God. We must not live to ourselves ; self is only to be regarded in a pure subordination to God, not as opposite to him, not as separated and divided from him only, as self-respects would tempt us not only to disobey God, but also to forget and neglect God. Most will grant that we are not to mind self in opposition to God, but few consider that we are not to mind self apart from him, but God must be at the end of all our desires, motions, actions, enjoyments ; though this latter be as evident a truth as the former. Natural self is to be denied as well as corrupt self, as appeareth by the example of Christ, who had no corrupt self to deny, and yet it is said, Rom. xv. 3, ‘He pleased not himself.’ Christ had an innocent natural will, by which he loved his natural life and peace—‘Father, let this cup pass ;’ but he submitted it to God—‘Not my will, but thine be done,’ Mat. xxvi. 39. Therefore we also must not only deny self as corrupted by sin, but self as separate from God. How else shall we submit to God in these things wherein he may lay a restraint upon us, or put us to trial about them, whether we love them in order to him, they being things which otherwise we may affect ? And besides, to love anything apart from God, and to seek it apart from God, and rejoice in it apart from God, without any reverence and respect to God, is to make the creature the last end in which the action terminateth, which is an invading of God’s prerogative. But if these things be so, who then can be saved ? For do not all love themselves, and please themselves, and seek their own things ? If they do not love the creature so as to fall into gluttony, drunkenness, adultery, oppression, and the like, yet in the temperate and lawful use of the creature, who looks to God ? I answer, All the godly should, or else they are not godly ; for there is no living to God and ourselves in an equal or violent degree, as a man cannot go two ways at once. But yet there is self in the faithful in a remiss degree, even self inordinately affected, that is either in opposition to God or apart from him in some particular acts, but the main drift and course of their lives is to God and for God. Living to God or self must be determined by what the man is principally set to maintain, promote, and gratify ; the end which

he doth principally design and endeavour after ; what his heart is most set upon, what he seeketh in the first place, Mat vi. 33 ; the pleasing or glorifying of God, or the pleasing and glorifying of the flesh, in some inferior good thing. What is it they live for ? So nothing in the world is so dear to you but you can leave it for God ; nothing you love so well but you love God better, and can part with it for his sake, and lay it at his feet ; nothing you would use and do but in order to God. But on the other side you give God a little respect, such as the flesh can spare, with the fragments and scraps of the table, when the flesh is full and is satisfied ; some crumbs of your estate, time, strength, but your life and love is employed about other things ; not careful to live to God, to serve him in all your affairs, to eat, and drink, and trade to his glory, and to redeem your time to attend upon him : this they understand not, mind not, and therefore still live to themselves.

2. I observe that which is spoken of is living to self and living to God. Living doth not note one single action, but the trade, course, and strain of our conversations, whether it be referred to self or God. Every single act of inordinate self-love is a sin, but living to ourselves is a state of sin. A man lives to self when self is his principle, his rule, and his end, the governing principle that sets him on work, or the spring that sets all the wheels a-going—the great end they aim at, and the rule by which they are guided and measure all things. If it be for themselves, they have a life in the work ; so the apostle : Phil. ii. 21, ‘ All seek their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ.’ ‘ Their own things ’ are their worldly ease, and profit, and credit ; when the things wherein Christ’s honour and kingdom are concerned are neglected. Any interest of their own maketh them ready, industrious, zealous, it may be, for Christ, when there are outward encouragements to a duty ; but when no encouragements, rather the contrary ; then cold and slack. So, on the other side, we live to God when his grace, or the new nature in us, is our principle, his service our work, or the business of our lives, and his glory our great end and scope ; when we have nothing, and can do nothing, but as from God, and by him, and for him : Phil. i. 11, ‘ Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.’

3. That love to God is the great principle that draweth us off from self to God ; for it is said, ‘ The love of Christ constraineth us.’ That is the beginning of all this discourse : such as a man’s love, inclination, and nature is, such will be the drift of his life. And therefore self-denial is never powerful and thorough unless it be caused by the love of God. But when a man once heartily loveth God, he can lay all things at God’s feet, and suffer all things and endure all things for God’s sake. Men will not be frightened from self-love ; it must be another more powerful love which must draw them from it ; as one nail driveth out another. Now what can be more powerful than the love of God, which is as strong as death ? Many waters cannot quench it, nor will it be bribed, Cant. viii. 7. This overcometh our natural self-love ; so that not only time, and strength, and estate, but life and all shall go for his glory : Rev. xii. 11, ‘ They loved not their lives to the death.’ Self-love is so deeply

rooted in us, especially love of life, that it must be something strong and powerful that must overcome it. What is nearer to us than ourselves? This is Christ's love. None deserveth their love so much as Christ. I know no happiness but to enjoy his love and glory; this prevaleth beyond their natural inclination.

4. The great thing which breedeth and feedeth this love is Christ's dying, that we might be dead to sin and the world, and might also be alive to God. The object of love is goodness. Now such goodness as this should beget love to Christ. This may be considered,—

[1.] As to the intention of the Redeemer. Surely if he aimed at this—the love and service of his redeemed ones—it is fit that he should obtain this end. Now this was Christ's end: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For this end Christ died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be lord of dead and living.' Christ had this in his eye, a power and dominion over us all, that he might rule us and govern us, and bring us into a perfect obedience of his will; that none of us might do what liketh him best, but what is most acceptable to Christ.

[2.] The grace and help merited. He obtained a new life for us, that we might be made capable to live, not to ourselves, but unto him. If he had obliged us only in point of duty to live unto God, and not obtained necessary grace to enable us to perform it, the love had not been so great. No, he hath obtained for us the gift of the Spirit, and the great work of the Holy Ghost is, by sanctifying grace, to bring off the soul from self to God: John xvi. 14, 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' This grace is not given us to exalt or extol any other thing but Christ alone, as Christ his Father, John xv. 8. That grace we have from Christ, and the Spirit inclineth us to make God our end and scope.

[3.] The obligation left on the creature by this great and wonderful act of mercy and kindness doth persuade us to surrender and give up ourselves to the Lord's use: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Take the argument either from the greatness of his sufferings, or the greatness of the benefits purchased; still the argument and motive is exceeding strong and prevailing. Shall the Son of God come and die such a painful, shameful death for us, and shall not we give up ourselves to him, and love him and serve him all our days?

2. I shall prove it by reasons.

[1.] The title that God hath to us. We are not our own, and therefore we must not live to ourselves; but we are God's, and therefore we must live unto God. This reason is urged: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' How are we God's? By creation, redemption, regeneration, and consecration; in all which respects God is more truly owner of you than you are of anything you have in the world.

(1.) We are his by creation—'It is he that made us, not we ourselves,' Ps. c. 3. What one member was made at our direction or

request, much less by our help and assistance? No, God framed us in the secret parts of the belly. Now if the husbandman may call the vine his own which he hath planted, God may much more call the creature his own which he hath made. God made us out of nothing. The husbandman cannot make a vine, he doth only set it and dress it; but God made us, and not we ourselves. The creature is wholly and solely of him and from him, and nothing else; therefore it should be wholly and solely to him and for him. Self-love is God's prerogative; he alone can love himself and seek himself, because he alone is from himself, and without dependence on any other; but we that are creatures, and depend upon God every moment for his providential assistance and supportation, are under the dominion and rule of him upon whom we do depend. And every motion and inclination of ours is under a rule. If we could any moment be exempt from the influence of his providence, we might be supposed to be exempted in that moment from his jurisdiction and government; but man wholly depending upon God for being and preservation, cannot lay claim or title to himself, or anything that is his, no, not for a moment. They were rebels against God's government who said, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' By what right can we call our tongue our own? We neither made it nor can keep it longer than God will; he is the maker of all things, and therefore should be the governor and end of all things. It is robbery and usurpation of God's right when you divert your respects from him, and set up self in his place.

(2.) By redemption. That right is pleaded: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and souls, which are God's.' By creation we owe ourselves to God; but by redemption we owe ourselves to him by a double and a more comfortable right and title. A man bought with another's money, if he died by his stripes, if he continued a day or two, his friends had no plea against his master. The law giveth this reason, for he is his money, Exod. xxi. 21; that is, his own purchase by money. But God hath bought us at a higher rate—with the blood of his Son: 1 Peter i. 18, 'The precious blood of Christ.' Therefore the redeemed are bound to serve him that ransomed them. If a man had bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his strength, and time, and service, belonged to the buyer. Christ hath bought us from the worst slavery, and with the greatest price. No thraldom so bad as the bondage of sin and Satan; no prison so black as hell; and no ransom so precious as the blood of the Son of God. And he bought us to this end, that we might live to God, not to ourselves. And therefore, unless we mean to defraud Christ of his purchase, we should mind this more than we do.

(3.) By regeneration. Whereby we are brought actually into Christ's possession, and fitted for his use; taken into his possession, for there is a spiritual union and conjunction between us and Christ; see 1 Cor. vi. 15-17, 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! Know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be

one flesh. What! but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' Mark there the grounds of the apostle's reasoning: he that is joined to a harlot is one flesh, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. What shall we conclude thence? That all that is ours is Christ's: ver. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!' Christ hath a right in all and everything that is a christian's. Members belong more to their head than slaves to their master, because of their near conjunction; and from thence they receive life, strength, and motion. Being engrafted into Christ, we must submit to be guided and quickened by his spirit; as fitted for his use, the new creature is fitted for the operations which belong to it; the withered branch is again quickened, that it may bring forth fruit unto God. God's best gifts would lie idle if this were not: Rom. vii. 4, 'Married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit to God.'

(4.) By voluntary contract and resignation. When we first enter into covenant with God, God giveth Christ, and all things with him, and we give up ourselves, and every interest of ours, unto God: Cant. ii. 16, 'I am my beloved's, and he is mine.' So that to alienate ourselves, and use ourselves for ourselves, it is not only robbery, but treachery and breach of covenant, because by our own solemn consent we owned and acknowledged God's right in us, and yielded up ourselves to the Lord, to be employed, ordered, and disposed by him at his own will and pleasure: Rom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.'

[2.] The danger which will come by it, if we should live to ourselves, and not to God.

(1.) The creature doth not only withdraw itself from God, but sets up another god; and so the crown is taken from God's head, and set upon the object of our own lust. The world is god, Mat. vi. 24; or the belly is god, Phil. iii. 19. We leave the true God but a name, and set up ourselves as our own end, and the pleasing of ourselves as our chief good, and use all creatures to this end, and love the present life and prosperity more than God, and set up our own will in contradiction to God's; all our labour and travail is to please ourselves and satisfy ourselves, and to break the bonds and cast off the yoke, and would be lords of ourselves and our own actions, and enjoy honours, and riches, and pleasures to ourselves.

(2.) There cannot a worse mischief befall us than to be given over to our own selves; or, this is the sorest plague: Ps. lxxxi. 12. 'So I gave them over to their hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' There is nothing maketh us more miserable than to be given over to our own choices. And he said well that made this prayer to God—*Libera me a malo homine, a me ipso.* For pride, sensuality, and worldliness will necessarily bear rule where a man is given over to himself; we have not a worse enemy than ourselves. It is self that depriveth us of heaven, that maketh us neglect and slight the grace of our Redeemer. Man's own will is the cause of his own misery, and thou offendest thyself more than all the world can do besides. Therefore a man hath more cause to hate himself than other things.

Use of all is to press us to this weighty duty of living to God, and not to ourselves. Not to our own will and interest, but according to the will and for the glory of God.

Motives—

1. Christ's self-denial, who came from heaven, not only to expiate our offences, but to give us an example. And wherein was the example? He telleth us he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, John vi. 38; and to promote his Father's glory: John viii. 50, 'I seek not my own glory.' He was still guided by his Father's will, and had his orders from heaven, for all that he did. Now how did he do the will of God, and seek the glory of God? He did it with delight; John iv. 34, 'It was meat and drink to him to do his Father's will.' A will wedded to itself, and his own honour, and ease, and credit, is most unlike Christ. And he did it with much patience and self-denial: Rom. xv. 3, 'He pleased not himself,' that is, sought not the interests of that life he had assumed, but contradicted them by his fastings, temptations, sufferings, through the reproaches and ingratitude of men, and outward meanness and poverty of his condition. And especially by his death and passion, there he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 4-8; that the same mind might be in us; that we might learn that life, and all the comforts of life, should not be so dear to us as the love of God and everlasting life; for Christ loved not his life in comparison of love to his Father and his church. He preferred the pleasing of his Father in the work of redemption before his own life. Christ emptied himself that God might be glorified. How unwilling are ye to go back two or three degrees in your pomp, or pleasure, or profit, for God's sake, when the sun of righteousness went back ten degrees!

2. We cannot be miserable while we are wholly his, and devote ourselves to his service: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' Paul's speech: Acts xxvii. 23, 'The God whose I am, and whom I serve.' Paul was confident of his help, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. There is no truer self-seeking than to deny all for God; if the happiness of man were in himself or any other creature, he needed not to have to do with God.

3. What a poor account can men make to God at the last day, that spend their lives in carnal pursuits! There is a time coming when God will take an account: Luke xix. 23, 'That at my coming I might have required mine own with usury.' A factor that hath embezzled his estate, what account can he give of it? A workman that hath loitered all day, how can he demand his wages at night? An ambassador that hath neglected his public business, and spent his time in play or courtships, what account can he give to his prince that sent him? How comfortable will it be when you can say, as Christ: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.'

4. We have lived to ourselves too long already. In the text it is 'henceforth'; and 1 Peter iv. 3, 'That he should no longer live the rest of his time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' Too much of our time already is employed in the service of our lusts; we may with grief look back upon the time we have spent as very long—too long—in pleasing the flesh. We have been long enough dishon-

ouring God and destroying our own souls, having so little time left, and so small strength and vigour left, to bestow upon God.

Directions—

1. Entirely and unreservedly devote yourselves to God. You must not reserve so much as your very lives, but resolve to resign up all to God. We have no interest of our own but what is derived from him, and subservient to him; own his right by your own consent and free resignation. If hitherto you have walked contrary to God, and opposite to him, come, lay down the bucklers; say as Paul, Acts ix. 6, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ Deliver up the keys of your heart, that he may come and take possession. If formerly you have given up yourselves to God, confirm the grant, Rom. xii. 1. Enter anew into the bond of the holy oath.

2. Being devoted to God in the whole course of your conversations, you must prefer his interest before your own. And when any interest of your own riseth up against the interest and will of God, care not for yourselves; set light by it, as if it were nothing worth; and let no self-respects tempt you to disobey God, though never so powerful. Let no hire tempt you to the smallest sin, no danger fright you from your duty: Dan. iii. 17, 18, ‘We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God is able to deliver us; if not, we will not worship the golden image which thou hast set up;’ so Acts xx. 24, ‘I count not my life dear to me.’ If we can but forget ourselves and remember God, he will remember us better than if we had remembered ourselves. Take care of your duty, and God will take care of your safety; we secure our stock by putting it all into God’s hands, and vending it in his service.

3. We are to use all the creatures, and all our enjoyments for God. Naturally a man useth and loveth the creature only for himself, but then he liveth to himself; but when he loves it and useth it for God, he liveth to God, 1 Cor. x. 31, and 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Though men are speculatively convinced all is God’s, yet they love it and use it as their own.

4. Being given up to God, we must study God’s will: Rom. xii. 2, ‘That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;’ Ps. i. 2, ‘But his delight is in the law of God.’ We must practise what we know, and still search that we may know more. Gross negligence and willing ignorance sheweth we have a mind to excuse and exempt ourselves in some kind of subjection from God; and his will should be reason enough to persuade us to what he hath required: 1 Thes. iv. 3, ‘This is the will of God, even your sanctification;’ 1 Thes. v. 18, ‘For this is the will of God concerning you;’ 1 Peter, ii. 15, ‘For this is the will of God, that with well-doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.’

5. We must take heed of carnal motives. Many such services we perform to God. There may be such as they that followed Christ for the loaves, John vi. 26. Some preached the gospel out of envy, as others out of good-will, Phil. i. 15. A man may seek himself carnally in a religious way; for a selfish man loves God, and all things else, for his carnal pleasure, and is serving himself in serving of God—an argument of a base and unworthy spirit. This was the devil’s allega-

tion against Job, chaps. i. 9–11, and ii. 4, 5; it is not thee they seek, but themselves; their own commodity rather than thy glory. There is no man to seek this accusation, but to be faithful with God when he crosseth his self-interest, and to be as zealous for him when secular motives are gone as he was before.

6. In every duty we must come farther home to God; for all christianity is a coming to God by Christ. Now we get farther home to God as the divine nature doth prevail in us, and the carnal, self-seeking nature is subdued: 2 Cor. v. 16, ‘Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.’

SERMON XXXI.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more.—2 COR. v. 16.

THERE were false apostles at Corinth, who gloried much in outward things; not only birth, wealth, abilities of speech, but such outward things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion; as their acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him when yet alive, and therefore are supposed to be intended in that expression, ‘I am of Christ,’ 1 Cor. i. 12. As others received the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. Now this boasting these Corinthian doctors used, as to keep up their own fame among the people, so to lessen and weaken the credit of Paul’s apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer that gloried, *ἐν προσώπῳ καυχομένους*, ver. 12, in external privileges, though they knew in their consciences they had little reason so to do, he had more valuable things to boast of—namely, that he was much in spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions for the honour of the gospel, and to all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, ‘and the love of Christ constraining him.’ This was the threefold cord: hope of reward, fear of punishment, and the love of Christ; and these were more valuable considerations whereupon to esteem of any one than external privileges could be. In their outward privileges he could vie with them; for though he was none of Christ’s followers here upon earth, yet he was equal to them, by seeing and having been spoken to by Christ out of heaven: 1 Cor. ix. 1. ‘Am not I an apostle? have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?’ But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for the faithful discharge of his work, upon the ground afore-mentioned, that he would

not glory ἐν προσώπῳ, as those others did. Mortified christians, or those that have seriously given up themselves to the Lord's use, should more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real worth, rather than such an external privilege—'Wherefore know we no man after the flesh,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A general conclusion inferred against the boasting of the Corinthian doctors—*Henceforth we know no man after the flesh*: we own no carnal respect to any man living, and do not value any by outward acquaintance with Christ, but according to the spiritual power that is in him, and taught by him.

2. The conclusion restrained unto the instance of Christ—*Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh*. Where there is—

[1.] A supposition—'Though we have known Christ after the flesh.'

[2.] An assertion—'Yet henceforth know we him no more;' that is, as a friend conversing with us upon earth in an outward way; but as a king and law-giver of the church, that is ascended up to heaven, there to govern the church by his Spirit and laws, offering and designing to us eternal life upon our obedience and fidelity to him. Well then, to know Christ after the flesh is not forbidden with intent to deny his humanity, or to exclude the comfort thence resulting, so we must still know him after the flesh; his human nature is the ground of our comfort; but that we should not esteem and judge of persons by their outward conversing with him, but their loyalty and obedience to him. This I think to be the most proper meaning of the words, though some, with probability, carry them another way, thus—'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh;' that is, we do not value men for their wealth, honour, nobility; and though we have known Christ after the flesh, alluding to his esteem, when a Pharisee. According to the humour of that sect, he looked for a pompous Messiah, but now owned him as a glorified Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God in the heavens.

First, The general truth—'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.' This knowledge is a knowledge of approbation: to know is to admire and esteem; as we ourselves should not seek our own esteem thereby, so not esteem others, κατὰ σώμα, for some external thing, which seemeth glorious in the judgment of the flesh.

Doct. 1. A christian should not religiously value others for external and carnal things.

Let us state it a little, how far we are to know no man after the flesh.

1. Negatively; and there—

[1.] It is not to deny civil respect and honour to the wicked and carnal; for that would destroy all government and order in the world: Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; and custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honour to whom honour.' We are to own parents, magistrates, persons of rank and eminency, with that respect which is due to their rank and quality, though they should be carnal; for the wickedness of the person doth not discharge us of our duty, or make void civil or natural differences and respects due to them.

[2.] Not to deny the gifts bestowed upon them, though common gifts; for your eye should not be evil, because God's is good, Mat. xx.

[3.] You may love them the better when religion is accompanied with these external advantages: Eccl. vii. 11, 'Wisdom with an inheritance is good.' Religious and noble, religious and beautiful, religious and learned, religious and rich; when grace and outward excellency meet, it maketh the person more lovely and amiable.

2. Positively.

[1.] We must not gild a potsherd, or esteem them to be the servants of Christ because of their carnal excellencies, and value them religiously, and prefer them before others who are more useful, and who have the image of God impressed upon them. This is to know men after the flesh, and to value men upon carnal respects. We do not judge so of a horse, by the saddle and trappings, but by his strength and swiftness. Solomon telleteth us, Prov. xii. 26, 'That the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' and explaineth himself, Prov. xix. 1, 'Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.' Grace should make persons more lovely in our eyes than carnal honour and glory.

[2.] The cause of God must not be burdened or abandoned because those of the other side have more outward advantages. This was the case between the apostle and the Desp.¹ And this is clearly to know men after the flesh, and such a course will justify the Pharisee's plea, John vii. 48, 49, 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed on him? but this people which knoweth not the law are cursed.' The truth is not to be forsaken because there is eminency, pomp, worldly countenance, repute for learning, on the other side. To this head may be referred the plea between the protestants and the papists about succession. Suppose it true that there were no gaps in their succession, that ours as to a series of persons cannot be justified, yet the plea is naught; for this is to know men after the flesh, and to determine of truth by external advantages. So if we should contemn the truths of God because of the persons that bring them to us; as usually we regard the man more than the matter, and not the golden treasure so much as the earthen vessel; it was the prejudice cast upon Christ, 'Was not this the carpenter's son?' Matheo Langi, Archbishop of Salzburg, told every one that the reformation of the mass was needless, the liberty of meats convenient, to be disburdened of so many commands of man concerning days just; but that a poor monk should reform all was not to be endured—meaning Luther.

[3.] We should not prefer these, to the despising and wrong of others: 1 Cor. xi. 22, every one took his own supper, but despised the church of God, that is, excluded the poor, who were of the church as well as they.

[4.] To value others for carnal advantages, so as it should be a snare or matter of envy to us: Prov. iii. 31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.'

[5.] Know no man after the flesh, so as to forbear christian duties to them, of admonition or reproof, or to accommodate God's truths to their liking: Mark xii. 14, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and

¹ So in original edition. Probably for 'desputers.'—ED.

carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth.'

[6.] Not to comply with carnal men for our own gain and advantage, Jude 16, 'Having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage ;' to soothe people in their errors or sins.

The reason is taken from the posture of the words in the context; this disposition, whatever it be, is an effect of the new nature, of the love of Christ, and a branch of not living to ourselves.

(1.) The new nature: ver. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' A new creature hath a new judgment of things; when a man is changed, his judgment of things is altered.

(2.) Of the love of Christ, ver. 14. He that loveth Christ as Christ, will love Christ in any dress of doctrine, plain and comely, or learned or eloquent, in any condition of life in the world, high or low; is not swayed by external advantages.

(3.) A branch of the spiritual life, ver. 15. The faithful, being born again of the Spirit, do live a new and spiritual life. Now this is one part of this life, not to know any man after the flesh; to be dead to things of a carnal interest, not moved with what is external and pleasing to the flesh. Let the carnal part of the world please themselves with these vain things—pomp of living, external rank, possession of the power of the church, &c.

Use is that of the apostle; James iv. 1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons ;' that is, do not esteem things that are religious for those things which have no affinity with or pertinency to religion. His reason is couched in the exhortation. Christ is the Lord of glory, and puts an honour upon all things which do belong to him, how despicable soever otherwise in the world's eye; not external things, but religion, should be the reason and ground of our affection.

Secondly, We come to the conclusion restrained to the instance of Christ—'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'

Doct. 2. A mere knowing of Christ after the flesh ought to cease among christians that have given up themselves to live to him, as dying and rising again for their sakes.

1. I shall prove to you that knowing Christ after the flesh was not that respect that he looked for when he was most capable of receiving love in this kind, namely, during his personal abode in the world. Even then an outward, ceremonious respect to his person was not so pleasing to him as a serious attention to his doctrine and counsel, and ever met with a correction and reproof from Christ, rather than approbation and acceptance with him; at least, Christ aimed at some higher thing, which was of more value and esteem with him. Search all his life. You read of some that desired to see him, John xii. 20-23; some Greeks that had a curiosity to see his person, and be more familiarly acquainted with him. Now Christ teacheth that the true means to know him to salvation was not to see with the eyes of the body, but by faith, in the spirit, as lifted up to glory. They impartially propound the matter to Philip, and he consults with Andrew, and both of them present their request to Christ; but he diverts to

the doctrine of the cross, and the glory that should ensue, to teach them to lay aside doting on his bodily presence, and to think of communion with him in his sufferings, and the duty that belonged to his exaltation. They came to see a man lately cried up by popular applause, and to gaze on him who was made so famous in the late triumph. So when some depended upon their hearing of him, and resort to his doctrine, he calleth them this would not do without other things: Luke xiii. 26, ‘Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.’ Yet if there be no more but kind converse, or an outward resort to his ministry as to an ordinary man—‘I know you not;’ this acquaintance is disclaimed. Some that not only heard, but commended him, as that forward woman: Luke xi. 27, 28, ‘And a certain woman lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.’ Yea, rather; it is a reproof. Oh no, woman; that is a blessed thing to hear the word of God, and keep it; that is not the use to applaud the person, but obey the doctrine. Still he calleth for a more spiritual respect. When they told him that his kindred, his mother and brethren, stood without to speak with him, Mat. xii. 47-50, Christ saith, ‘Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.’ Believing in Christ, and obeying God’s will, rendereth us more acceptable than if we did touch him in blood and kindred. Augustine saith of the Virgin Mary, *Beator Maria percipiendo fidem Christi quam concipiendo carnem Christi; Materna propinquitas, &c.*—that she was more happy in carrying Christ in her heart than conceiving of him in her womb. So Mark v. 18, 19, when Christ had cured a man that was possessed of a whole legion of devils, ‘he prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but bid him go home to his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.’ Our love to Christ is better shown, not in our human and passionate affections to his bodily presence, but in performance of those religious services he requireth of us; he lingered after his bodily presence, but Christ expected not the offices of human conversation, but duty and obedience to his commands from him. So there is a famous instance of Christ’s entertainment at Bethany, Mark x. 38-52. There were two sisters, severally employed; Martha busied in the ministries and services of the outward entertainment, ‘but Mary sat at Christ’s feet (the posture of disciples) and heard his word;’ the one careful to entertain Christ in her heart, the other into her house. Christ, wherever he came, was willing to improve the opportunity, and to leave some spiritual blessing behind him. He came not to be feasted, but to refresh souls. Martha complaineth of Mary, as if her devotion had been unseasonable, to leave the burden of the household affairs to her alone; but Christ sheweth Mary’s respect was more pleasing to him than Martha’s, hearkening to his word rather than making provisions for his person. Many would seem to gratify Christ with an outward and carnal respect, but do not hearken to his gracious words. So in other things; weeping for him when he went to suffer: Luke xxiii. 28, ‘Weep not for me, ye daughters

of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and children.' That would not comport with the end of the death of Christ, which was not to be looked upon as a spectacle of human calamity, but as a mystery of higher consideration, and God looked for more noble and spiritual motions than this passionate condoling. So to fight for him; Peter was in a rage when they came to attack Christ, and therefore draweth on a whole troop: John xviii. 11, 'Put up thy sword in thy sheath, Peter. The cup which my Father hath put into my hand, shall I not drink of it?' Peter's act seemed to express much zeal and affection to Christ's person, but Christ sheweth that he was appointed for a higher purpose, and checketh Peter for his rashness. Nay, the disciples languishing for the comforts of his bodily presence, then Christ told them, John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' When a man is ready at our command, and willing to do what we would have him to do, it is a sign of his love; to be up and be doing is a sure manifestation of obedience; so John xx. 27, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend.' Mary Magdalene was now fallen at Christ's feet, and embraced them, Mat. xxviii. 9. They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. In a humble and affectionate devotion, she hangeth about our Saviour; but Christ forbids this embracing—'Touch me not;' it comes of human affection, out of a compliment; but Christ rejects this testimony of her love, and directs her to a more acceptable service,—to carry tidings to his brethren of his resurrection. And it is more acceptable and pleasing to him to be about our service, and doing good in our station, than to be performing these offices of human love, and kindness to his person, entertaining him, seeing, hearing him, weeping for him, defending him. Otherwhiles he bids them come to him: Luke xxiv. 39, 'Handle, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;' for a confirmation of their faith.

2. There is a knowing Christ after the flesh since his ascension into heaven.

[1.] By a naked profession of his name, without conformity to his laws. There are disciples in name, and disciples in deed: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Christ hath some disciples who are so in reality, and others who are so in show only; there is no true ground of solid comfort but in being real disciples. Others are but christians in the letter, not in the spirit. Those that are in the letter have notions of God and Christ, and heaven and hell; but they have but names and notions of these things, but feel nothing of the power and life that accompanieth these things. A man may profess himself a christian, and yet perish with unbelievers; yea, be as great an enemy to Christ as the Jews that crucified him, and the heathens that worshipped other gods. A grieving of his Spirit, a despising the fruits of his purchase, a refusal of his holy ordinances, and a hatred of his servants, is no less offensive to him, and may argue as little affection in us, as either the spite of the Jews or idolatry of the heathens did in them to Christ. I call this profession of careless, lawless christians, a knowing Christ after the flesh, because it is a mere carnal, human, natural respect to Christ's memory, such as a man beareth to his famous ancestors, or the

deceased heroes of his country, not befitting him who is our mediator, and lord of all things, who is best remembered when our hearts are converted to him, and when his laws are obeyed; such as the Jews did bear to Abraham, the founder of their nation, or Moses the law-giver of their country. Surely Abraham and Moses were as dear to the carnal Jews as Christ can be to us; but Christ calleth them, 'If you were Abraham's seed, you would do the works of Abraham,' John viii. 39; and John v. 46, 'If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' They were Abraham's seed after the flesh, not after the spirit; they were Abraham's seed after the flesh, but that did avail them nothing, since they did not follow his example, but sought to kill him, which was far from Abraham's spirit and temper. A little of men's practice is a surer rule to try by than all their fair language and complimentary respect: John ix. 28, 29, 'Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake to Moses: but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' However he, or such as he, were so fully resolved to become disciples to Christ, yet they would cleave to Moses, John ix. 28. Thus are the best of men mistaken and abused by their carnal successors: they made use of Moses' name to excuse their disobedience to Christ. It is an old trick of degenerate men to cry up the names of pious ancestors, and externally to adore the memory of saints departed; but such motives of love are but carnal, when there is an apparent inconformity between you and the persons whom you would magnify. We detest the memory of Annas and Caiaphas, Judas, and such others as conspired to take away the life of Christ; so did they of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Ahab was accounted as wicked by them as Pilate by us; therefore to rest in a naked, historical belief, and mere profession of the name of Christ, when there is such an apparent insubjection to his laws, it is but a knowing Christ after the flesh, owning him as the God of the country upon custom and tradition. Well then, Christ is never rightly entertained but when his doctrine is received and entertained by faith; though there should be a hatred of his persecutors, a quarrelling for his religion, you put him to more shame in your conversations, and crucify him afresh every day: Heb. vi. 6, 'Seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.' A quarrelling ruffian may be ready to fly in the face of him that shall speak a disgraceful word against his father, when his own dissolute and ungracious wicked courses grieve his father's spirit, and shame him more than all their reproaches; so many will pretend much love to Christ, and in a heat and quarrel be ready to venture their lives for their religion. No man would have his religion despised; but yet he shameth and bringeth it most into contempt that matcheth it with disproportionate practices; as those are called enemies to the cross of Christ that preached Christ, but yet lived in a sensual and earthly manner, Phil. iii. 19.

[2.] By acts of sensitive affection in the reading or meditating on the story of Christ's sufferings, or when you hear his passion laid open in a rhetorical fashion. Men, at such occasions, find that there is stirred up in themselves some fond pity at his sufferings, and indignation at the Jews, and are ready to fly in the face of Judas that betrayed

him, and the rulers and those that put him to death. All this is but a human natural respect, such as we will find in ourselves at any tragical representation, true or false. Let a man but read the sad preparation of Abraham, when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac; or the pitiful words and moans of Jacob, when they told him that some beast had devoured Joseph, and showed him his coat; the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they handled that miserable king Zedekiah, when they had first slain his children before his face, and then put out his eyes; or the lamentations of Dido for Aeneas, when she slew herself. These stories will draw as many tears from our eyes as the story of Christ's sufferings; things of small importance, well represented to the fancy, may thus affect us. And besides, these light affections do not comply with God's end in the mystery of redemption. We are not to reflect upon the death of Christ as a tragical accident or sad story, but as a well-spring of salvation; and God looketh for more noble and spiritual motions—namely, that we should be affected with the horror of our sins that crucified the Lord of glory, and the terror of that dreadful severity which God manifested on his own Son when he took our burden upon him, and the admiration of his incomparable wisdom, which could join his mercy with his justice, the unspeakable joy of salvation, which is derived thence to us, and the ardent love which we should bear to the Father, who hath given his Son to die for us. These are the true resentments of the death of Christ; even that we may raise our hopes of mercy upon the foundation of his merit and satisfaction as the price of our blessings, and engage ourselves to God in a way of thankfulness for his great love and mercy, and increase our hatred of sin, having such a glass wherein to view our hatefulness. Now these are spiritual respects; the other are but carnal, such as we would show to man pitifully handled.

[3.] By expressing our respects more in the pomp and pageantry of outward compliments, rather than serious devotion, or a hearty obedience to his laws, or worshipping him in spirit and in truth. This is also a knowing Christ after the flesh, or a carving out a respect to him that rather suiteth with our carnal minds than his glorious estate now in heaven. The whole genius of the popish religion runneth this way, where the worship of Christ is turned into a theatrical pomp, and the simplicity of the gospel is changed into weak and silly observances and beggarly rudiments, which betray it to the contempt and scorn of all considering men, and is no more pleasing to Christ than the mockage of the Jews and soldiers that put a purple robe upon Christ, and cried, Hail, king of the Jews! when they spit upon him, and buffeted him. In christians it is but to compliment Christ, to feast and make mirth for his memory, and deck our bodies and houses, whilst we look not after rejoicing in the spirit; to be all for sumptuous temples, and costly furniture, and rich altar-cloths and vestments, while his laws are trampled under foot; and those that would sincerely worship Christ, and make it their business to go to heaven, are despised and maligned, and it may be condemned to the fires. It is not the pomp of ceremonies, but faith and brokenness of heart, and diligence in his service, and living in the Spirit, that Christ mainly looketh after. Religion looketh more like a worldly thing in a carnal dress, but the

king's daughter is glorious within, Ps. xlv. 13. The glory of the true church, and every member thereof, is in things spiritual, as knowledge, faith, love, hope, courage, zeal, sobriety, patience, humility ; these are the true glories of the saints, not golden images, and rich accommodations, and outward triumph, and carnal revellings. And the great thing Christ hath commanded to us in his doctrine is a holy heart and a holy life : Ps. xciii. 5, ' Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever ;' not pomp and gaudry of worship, but purity and holiness, that is a standing ornament.

[4.] By herding with a stricter party, whilst yet our hearts are not subdued to God. There are three places prove this : Gal. vi. 15, ' For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature ; ' Gal. v. 6, ' For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by love ; ' and 1 Cor. vii. 19, ' Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God.' Men hug others because they are of their party and fellowship ; it is religion enough to be one of them, of such a party and denomination as obtains the vogue, and is of most esteem among christians in that age. Yet how strict soever our party be, if our hearts be not subdued to Christ, all is as nothing in the sight of God ; till a man be a new creature, it is but a fleshly knowing of Christ. A man may change his party, as a piece of lead will receive any impression, either angel or devil, or what you stamp upon it.

3. This knowing Christ after the flesh will do us no good, be of no comfort and use to us as to the salvation of our souls.

[1.] Because God is no respecter of persons : 1 Peter i. 17, ' If you call him father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works.' The *προσωποληψία* is the outward appearance, but God is *ἀπροσωπητώς κρίνοντα*, one that doth not judge by outward respects. The *prosopon* of the Jew was his knowledge of the law, and enjoying the ordinances of God ; the *prosopon* of the christian is his profession of respect to Christ and esteem of him. But God judgeth not by the appearance, but by the internal habit and constitution of the heart, manifested by an uniform obedience to his whole will ; otherwise circumcision may become uncircumcision, or christianity as paganism. Therefore it is not enough to profess you are for Christ, of his faction and party ; for there is a faction of christians as well as a religion. They are of the faction of christians, whose interest and education leadeth them to profess love to Christ, without any change of heart, or serious bent of soul towards him. Now this is the *prosopon* according to which God may be supposed to judge ; for you do not think riches or poverty, fear or love, can so much as be supposed to be in God, but profession or not profession is that he looks to.

[2.] Because Christ hath put us upon another trial than a fond affection to his outward person and memory, namely, by our respect to his commandments : John xiv. 21, ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' There is the main ; other things will not pass for love, though they be taken for such in the world. And John xv. 14, ' Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I

command you.' Perfect friendship consists in harmony, or an agreement in mind and will. If you have any true love to Christ, it will make the soul hate everything which it knoweth to be contrary to his nature and will: Ps. xcviij. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil;' and constraineth the soul to set about everything which it knoweth will please and honour him: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' if we do but love him, and be sensible of the obligation he hath left upon us. So it will be in a real spiritual love.

[3.] Because they cannot truly challenge the name of christians that do only know Christ after the flesh. Christ, being now exalted, requireth a spiritual converse with him. When Christ hath laid aside his mortal life, we should lay aside our carnal conceits and affections. There were some Jewish impostaers that Eusebius writeth of, mongrel christians, Chocabites and Nazarites, who called themselves the Lord's kinsmen; a sort of cozening and heretical companions they were, who, for their own purposes, foraged the country up and down, as the gipsies now do, amusing the world with genealogies, and drawing the vulgar after them, with many vain fancies, denied the resurrection, interpreting all said about it of the new creature, pretending belief in Christ, but observing the law of Moses, against whom the Epistle to the Galatians is supposed to be written. And there were some that knew Moses after the flesh, and seemed to pretend much zeal to the law of Moses. Now the apostle saith they deserved to be called the concision rather than the circumcision, whereof they gave out themselves to be patrons and defenders. The true believers had right to that title, because they had the thing signified by circumcision, worshipping God with the inward and spiritual affection of a renewed heart, and trusting in Christ alone for salvation, who was the substance of the shadows, and renouncing confidence in fleshly privileges, worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. So for christians glorying in externals is scarce worthy the name of christianity, if they have the name, not the reality.

[4.] Because this knowing Christ after the flesh is inconsistent with his glorious estate in heaven. It pleased him not in the days of his flesh. A divine spiritual affection doth only befit the state of glory to which he is exalted. Now he is ascended into heaven, he is to be known in faith and worshipped in spirit; his body is above all kindness, and his memory is to be respected not as the memory of an honourable man, but as one who is Lord of the church, and governeth it by his Spirit to the end of the world, Phil. ii. 10, 11; not, 'Lord, Lord,' but obedience, Mat. vii. 22.

Use 1. Is reproof of those that please themselves with that deceit of heart, that if they had lived in the days of Christ, conversed with our Saviour, and heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles and holy life, they would not have used him as the Jews did, but expressed kindness and love to his person. Now to these let me say—

1. That it is an old deceit of heart. We usually translate the scene of our duty to former times, and lay aside at the present that work and expression of love which God hath called us to. God knoweth in what age to cast you, and what means and dispensations are fittest for you; he that doth not improve present means will not improve any:

1 Peter. i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' If ye receive his doctrine, obey his laws, believe in him, love him, rejoice in the midst of afflictions, you express your love to Christ.

2. It is not likely you would do otherwise, having the same temper and constitution of soul which they had that opposed Christ, the same root of bitterness in you. You hate those in whom there is the image of Christ, and some representation of his holiness and meekness. We read of those, Mat. xxiii. 29, 30, 'Who build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,' who yet persecuted Christ; as many will condemn the former adversaries of the martyrs, Bonner and Gardiner. Christ taught no other doctrine than that which the prophets and martyrs had done; but dead saints do not exasperate. And what entertainment would a rude, dissolute sort of people give to such a mean but holy person as Christ was, that was so free in his reproofs?—'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,' John viii. 44. He that now sheweth a spiteful and malicious mind against the truth and servants of God shall never make me think otherwise, but if he had lived in Christ's days he would have been as ready and forward to persecute him as the worst. Certainly a Herod and a Herodias to John Baptist would have been an Ahab and a Jezebel to Elijah; ask them what they thought of Ahab and Jezebel, they would have made many great protestations that they would have done far otherwise, but they did the same things to him that came in the spirit and power of Elias. No miscreant but will cry out on the treachery of Judas, the envy and malice of the high priests, the fury of Jews; yet the same thing is done by them whilst godliness is persecuted; they are still desirous to break this vessel where this treasure lieth; dead saints are out of sight, no eyesore to them, no way offensive to their ears.

3. If you should, this would not save you, without conversion to God. The same laws were in force then that are now; knowing Christ after the flesh would do you no good, but a spiritual and true affection to him. The reward was still promised to true disciples: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' When some came to see him, he exhorted to imitation of his example and subjection to his laws. It is but an outside appearance, unless we humbly engage in his service, and have a desire to please him in all things. Oh! therefore let us make this use of the love of Christ, and the sense of our engagements to him, as to know Christ, not after the flesh, but so as to love him and serve him, and subject ourselves to his laws.

Use 2. Have we a better knowledge of Christ? Do we know him after the flesh, or after the spirit?

1. The ground of our knowledge, what is it?—common tradition, human credulity, or the illumination of the Holy Ghost? The same truths work differently, as represented in a different light. Common report begets a cold christianity, Mat. xvi. 16, 17; 1 John v. 4, 5;

1 Cor. ii. 4. Hearsay is an advantage, yet not to be rested in. We stand upon higher ground than heathens, yet are not taller men : John iv. 42, ‘Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the saviour of the world.’ We ourselves should be acquainted with Christ ; then we know the truth with more efficacy : John viii. 32, ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,’ with more clearness and certainty : John xvii. 8, ‘They have known surely—ἀληθῶς—that I came out from thee’ ; Acts ii. 36, ‘Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly—ἀληθῶς—that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ You may venture safely upon it, build on it as a sure foundation ; the other is but a dead and weak thing, it vanquisheth no temptations, subdueth no carnal affections.

2. The fruits and effects of our knowledge.

[1.] It is a transforming knowledge : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.’ Such a knowledge as begets union with Christ, and a thorough change, so as to be converted to him ; for it follows in the next verse to the text—‘Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.’ Christ liveth a new kind of life in heaven, so should we upon earth ; he hath laid aside his mortal life, so should we our carnal life, live to God in the spirit—‘Know him, and the power of his resurrection,’ Phil. iii. 10. Christians are to be esteemed by their profiting in godliness ; that is, knowing him after the spirit. When we know that spiritual power which is in him, and feel it in ourselves, renewing and changing the heart, we find the power of his resurrection raising us from the death of sin to the life of grace, if we are planted into Christ as living members of his mystical body.

[2.] It is a knowledge that obscureth the splendour of all outward excellences in our opinion, estimation, and affection : 1 Cor. ii. 2, ‘For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified ;’ Phil. iii. 8, ‘Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.’ All is nothing to this.

[3.] It weaneth the heart from outward observances and bodily exercises to solid godliness, or looking after the life and power of them. The ordinances of the law, though of God’s own institution, are called carnal : Heb. vii. 16, ‘Not after the law of a carnal commandment ;’ the worship of the gospel, spirit and truth : John iv. 23, 24. ‘The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ The more true knowledge of the gospel, the more of this. As the apostle distinguisheth the περιτομὴ from the κατατομὴ, Phil. iii. 2, 3 ; and the apostle speaketh of the Jew, Rom. ii. 28, 29, ‘For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter,

whose praise is not of men but of God.' So it is with better reason true of the christian, the worship of the gospel consisting little of externals, but being rational spiritual worship: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ;' Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him'—we receive his Spirit. That is a sorry zeal, and hath little of a christian spirit, that runneth altogether upon outward things. Christianity first degenerated by this means, and the life and power of it was extinguished when it began to run out altogether in form, and men out of a natural devotion grew excessive that way. A christian, in obedience to God, is to use his instituted externals, but his heart is upon the spirit and soul of duties. Multiplying rites and ceremonies has eaten out the life and heart of religion. The more spiritual and substantial worship is the better, if there be humble and affectionate reverence, a ready subjection and submission to him flowing from grace, engaging the heart to God, and animated by the influence and breathing of his Spirit.

SERMON XXXII.

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—
2 Cor. v. 17.*

THIS is an inference out of the former doctrine. Two things the apostle had said—'Henceforth we no more live to ourselves,' ver. 15, and, 'Henceforth know we him no more,' ver. 16. There is a change wrought in us—a change of life, and a change of judgment; a new life, because there is a new judgment. Now in the text he sheweth a reason why he changed his judgment and life, and lived and judged otherwise than he did before, because there is such a change wrought in all that belong to Christ, that they are, as it were, other persons than they were. As when Saul prophesied: 1 Kings x. 6, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man,' not in respect of person, or in regard of substance, but some gifts and graces. So these should be as other creatures, as new creatures. Now these things should only be in esteem with christians which belong to the new creature or regeneration. 'Therefore if any man be in Christ,' &c.

In the words we have a proposition—(1.) Asserted; (2.) Explained.

1. The proposition asserted is hypothetical, in which there is—(1.) An hypothesis or proposition—*If any man be in Christ;* (2.) The assertion built thereon—*He is a new creature—καὶ νέος κτίσις*, a new creation. The act of creation is signified by this form of speech, as well as the thing created.

2. The proposition explained; for there is—(1.) A destructive work, or a pulling down of the old house—*Old things are passed away;*

(2.) An adstructive work, or raising of the new fabric—*All things are become new.* The words are originally taken out of Isa. lxv. 17, and Isa. lxvi. 22, where God promiseth a new heaven and a new earth; that is, a new world or a new state of things. Which promises had a threefold accomplishment.

[1.] These promises should have some accomplishment at their return from Babylon, which was a new world to the ruined and exiled state of the church of the Jews.

[2.] These promises were fulfilled to all believers in their regeneration, which is as a new world to sinners.

[3.] They shall be accomplished most fully in the life to come, for the apostle telleth us, 2 Peter iii. 19, ‘We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ Here it signifieth then that all things which belong to the old man shall be abolished, and the new man, and its interests and inclinations, cherished.

Doct. All those that are united to Christ are, and ought to be, new creatures.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to be new creatures. (2.) In what sense we are said to be united to Christ. (3.) How the new creation floweth from our union with Christ.

First. What it is to be new creatures, It implieth—

1. That there must be a change wrought in us, so that we are as it were other men and women than we were before; as if another soul came to dwell in our body. This change is represented in such terms in scripture as do imply such a broad and sensible difference as is between light and darkness, Eph. v. 8; life and death, 1 John. iii. 14; the new man and the old, Eph. iv. 22–24. The vicious qualities must be subdued and mortified, and contrary qualities and graces planted in their stead. A man is so changed in his nature as if a lion were turned into a lamb, as the prophet says when he sets forth the strange effects of Christ’s powerful government over the souls of those who by the ministry of the word are subdued to him: Isa. xi. 6–8, ‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a young child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw with the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.’ They shall be so inwardly and thoroughly changed that they shall seem new creatures, transformed out of beasts into men; and instead of a hurtful, they should have an innocent and harmless disposition. Without a metaphor this is represented: 1 Cor. vi. 11, ‘And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ An instance we have, Philem. 11, in Onesimus, ‘which in time past was unprofitable, now profitable both to thee and me.’

2. This change must be such as may amount to a new creation. There are some changes which do not go so far; as—

[1.] A moral change: from profaneness to a more sober course of life. There are some sins which nature discovereth, which may be prevented by such reasons and arguments as nature suggesteth: Rom. ii.

14, 'For the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law ; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves.' This may be done by philosophical institution, without an interest in Christ, or the power of the Holy Ghost, or knowledge of the scriptures. Men may a little fashion their outward behaviour into an handsomer mode and dress ; but the new creature signifieth such a change that not only of vicious he becometh virtuous, but of carnal he becometh spiritual. I gather that from John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit.' A man by nature is carnal, yea, very flesh itself. He is so when he inclineth to things pleasing to the flesh, seeketh them only, favoureth them only, affecteth them only, inclineth to them only. They that are guided by sense, and not by faith, by the interests and inclinations of the flesh, and not the spirit, are natural men, whatever change is wrought in them : Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit ;' and 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man discerneth not the things of God ;' he acteth but as a nobler and better-natured animal or living creature. The flesh may be pleased in a cleanly as well as in a grosser manner : and though men live plausibly, yet still they may live to themselves, and only live the animal life, not only common to us and other men, but us and beasts ; their thoughts, ends, cares run that way ; and being void of spiritual life, are ignorant, mindless of another world, or the way that leadeth thither, and desire it not. Now these, though they are not profane, do not wallow in gross sins and wickedness, whereby others dishonour human nature, yet because they do not look after a better life, have no desire of better things fixed upon their minds, they are carnal. That is the true change, and they only are new creatures who before sought carnal things with the greatest earnestness, breathed after carnal delights, contented themselves with this lower happiness, but afterwards desire spiritual and heavenly things, and really endeavour to get them, which mere human nature can never bring them unto ; for flesh riseth no higher than a fleshy inclination can move it. Others are but as a sow washed ; a sow washed is a sow still. So is a carnal man well fashioned.

[2.] Not some sudden turn into a religious frame, and as soon worn off. A man may have some devout pangs and fits, such as Ahab had in his humiliations, when he went mournfully and softly, 1 Kings xxi. 27 ; or as those that howled upon their beds for corn and wine and oil, and were frightened into a little religiousness in their straits and necessities, Hos. vii. 14 ; or those whom the prophet speaketh of : Jer. xxxiv. 15, 'And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight ; but ye returned again, and polluted my name.' A people may be changed from evil to good, but then they may change again from good to evil. This change doth not amount to the new creature, for that is a durable thing : 1 John iii. 9, *σπέρμα μένον*, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' To be good for a day, a week, or month, is but a violent enforcing themselves into a religious frame, on some great judgment, distress, powerful conviction, or solemn covenanting with God : Deut. v. 29, 'Oh that there were an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments.'

[3.] A change of outward form without a change of heart; as when a man changeth parties in religion, and from an opposer becometh a professor of a stricter way. No, the scripture opposeth this to the new creature: Gal. vi. 15, 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' A christian is not to be esteemed by any prerogative in the flesh, but by a real regeneration; if we have not the effect and power of our profession, it will do us no good to come under the form of it. The new creature lieth more in a new mind, new will, and new affections, than in a new tongue, or a new form, or a new name. And usually in the regenerate there is a change, as from profaneness to profession, so from profession and formality to a deep reality and godly sincerity. Sometiines they may go together, but that is in those that are religiously bred up. Commonly it is otherwise; and therefore when converted there is a new faith and a new repentance, and they serve God after a new manner, and pray and hear otherwise than they were wont to do. Therefore certainly it is not being of this or that party or opinion, though some more strict than others, or doing this or that particular thing, or submitting to this or that particular ordinance, nor a bare praying or hearing, or some kind of repenting or believing, that will evidence our being in Christ, but the doing all these things in a new state and nature, and with that life and seriousness which becometh new creatures.

[4.] Not a partial change. It is not enough to be altered in this or that particular, but the whole nature must be turned. Men from passionate may grow meek, from negligent they may be more frequent in duties of religion; but the old nature still continueth. There may be some transient acts of holiness which the Holy Ghost worketh in us as a passenger, not as an inhabitant; some good inclinations in some few things, like a new piece in an old garment, there is no suitableness; and so their returning to sinning is worse than their first sinning, and for the present one part of their lives is a contradiction and a reproach to another. In the text 'all old things are passed away, and all things are become new;' not a few only. There are new thoughts, new affections, new desires, new hopes, new loves, new delights, new passions, new discourses, new conversations. This work new mouldeth the heart, and stampeth all our actions, so that we drive a new trade for another world, and set up another work to which we were utter strangers before, and have new solaces, new comforts, new motives. The new creature is entire, not half new and half old. This is the difference between the new birth and the old: in the natural birth a creature may come forth maimed, wanting an arm, a leg or a hand; but in the new creation there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees, for a defect of parts cannot be supplied by an after-growth. A new creature is made all new; there is a universality in the change. God worketh not his work by halves; no man had ever his heart half new and half old. No, though his work be not perfect, yet it is growing to its perfection. If any one corruption remain unmortified, or unbroken or allowed in the soul, it keepeth afoot the devil's interest, and will in time spoil all the good qualities we have.

3. No change amounteth to the new creature but what introduceth the life of God and likeness to God.

[1.] Where the new creation obtaineth, there is life, called sometimes the life of God, Eph. iv. 18, because it came from God, and tendeth to him ; sometimes spiritual life, Gal. v. 25, and 1 Peter. iv. 6, because the Spirit is the author of this change ; sometimes a scriptural life, because the word of God is the rule and food of it, Phil ii. 16, ‘Holding forth the word of life ;’ sometimes a heavenly life, because of its end and tendency : Phil. iii. 20, ‘But our conversation is in heaven.’ But call it what you will, a life there is : the soul that was dead in sin becometh alive to God, yea, the Spirit itself becometh a principle of life in us; so that they are really alive to God, and dead to sin and the world. Now would you know whether a man be alive or dead ? Observe him in his desires and endeavours after God, and there you shall see by his actions and earnestness that he is alive. But if you would try whether a carnal man be alive or dead, you must see by his desires and endeavours after the flesh that he is alive, for by any that he hath after God you cannot see it. Sense, motion, and affection are the fruits of life. Stirrings, and activity, and sensible feelings are uncertain things to judge by ; but the scope, tendency, and drift of our endeavours will more certainly discover it. He that is regenerated by the power and Spirit of Christ doth no more seek his happiness in carnal things ; but the bent, drift and stream of his life and love doth carry his love another way.

[2.] Where the new creation obtaineth there is likeness ; and to be new creatures is to be made like God, or to have the soul renewed to God’s image : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory ;’ ‘Christ is formed in you,’ Gal. iv. 19 ; made ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ 2 Peter. i. 4. It is for the honour of Christ that his people should bear his image and superscription, that he should do as much for the renovation of the soul, and the restitution of God’s image, as Adam did for the deformation of the soul, and the forfeiture of it ; therefore in the new creation his great work is to make us holy, as God is holy. The Spirit is sent by him from the Father to stamp God’s image upon the heirs of promise, whereby they are sealed and marked out for God’s peculiar ones ; they are sanctified and cleansed, and made more like God and Christ, and are in the world such as he was in the world. Nothing under heaven so like God as a holy soul.

4. This new state of life and likeness to God is fitly called a new creature ; partly to show that it is God’s work, for he only can create, and therefore in scripture always ascribed to him : Eph. ii. 10, ‘We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works ;’ so, Eph. iv. 24, ‘Put on the new man, which is created after God ;’ so, James i. 18, ‘He hath begotten us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits among his creatures.’ We are so far dead in trespasses and sins, that only an almighty, creating power is requisite to work this change in us, nothing less will serve the turn. And partly because this change thus wrought in us doth reach the whole man, the soul and all the faculties thereof, the body and all the members thereof are also renewed and changed : 1 Thes. v. 23, ‘I pray God sanctify your whole body, spirit and soul.’ A man hath a new judgment, esteeming all things as they tend to promote God’s glory and our eternal happiness ; a new will and affections, inclining to and

desiring all things to this end, that we may please, glorify, and enjoy God; and the body is more ready to be employed to a gracious use and purpose. There is a change wrought in our whole man, and the inclination and bent of our lives is turned another way; so that the good we once hated we now love, and the sin that we loved we now hate, the duty that was tedious is now delightful.

Secondly. How are we united to Christ? ‘If a man be in Christ,’ it is said in the text. In the scripture Christ is sometimes said to be in us: Col. i. 27, ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory.’ Sometimes we are said to be in him, as here, as he is also said to live in us, and we in him, Gal. ii. 20. Being in Christ noteth our union with him, and interest in him. Now a man is united to Christ two ways—

1. Externally.
2. Internally.

1. Externally, by baptism and profession: John xv. 2, ‘Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.’ These branches are in him only by external covenanting, and professing relation to him, and visible communion with him in the ordinances.

2. Internally; when we are ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ by his Spirit, and have the real effect of our baptism and profession: 1 Cor. xii. 13, ‘By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.’ These two unions may be resembled by the ivy, that adhereth to the oak, and the branches of the oak itself, which live in their root; the ivy hath a kind of life from the oak by external adhesion, but bringeth forth fruit of its own; the branches grow out of the root, and bear fruit proper to the tree. All that are in Christ by external adhesion are bound *de jure* to be new creatures; but those that are in Christ by mystical implantation, not only ought to be, but are, new creatures.

Thirdly. How the new creation floweth from our union with Christ.

1. They that are ingrafted into Christ are made partakers of his Spirit. And therefore by that Spirit they are renewed, and have another nature put into them: Titus iii. 5, 6, ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;’ are fitted to live a new life. It is not meet the Spirit of Christ should work no otherwise than the bare spirit of a man. If one had power to put the spirit of man into a brute beast, that brute beast would discourse rationally. All that are united to Christ partake of his divine Spirit, who doth sanctify the souls of his people, and doth mortify and master the strongest corruptions, and raise them to those inclinations and affections to which nature is an utter stranger. The impressions left upon the soul by the Spirit may be seen in the three theological graces which constitute the new creature, mentioned 1 Cor. xiii. 13, ‘But now abideth faith, hope, and charity;’ and 1 Thes. v. 8, ‘Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation;’ and elsewhere, ‘Faith, love, and hope.’ Now the operations of all these graces imply a new and strange nature put into us.

[1.] Faith, which convinceth us of things unseen, and to live in the

delightful forethought of a world to come: 2 Cor. iv. 16–18, ‘For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ Now will there not be a manifest difference between a man that is governed by sense, and one guided and influenced by faith? Certainly, more than there is in a man that delighteth in ordering the affairs of commonwealths, and a child that delighteth in moulding clay pies. So for love: a child of God is so affected with the goodness that is in God, and the goodness that floweth from God in the wonders of his love by Christ, and the goodness we hope for when all the promises are fulfilled, that all their delights, desires, and endeavours are after God; not to be great in the world, but to enjoy God: Ps. lxxiii. 25, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire besides thee;’ and therefore can easily overcome fleshly and worldly lusts, and such inclinations as the rest of the world are mastered with. Well then, a christian ingrafted into Christ loseth all property in himself, and is freed from self-love, and that carnal vanity to which it is addicted. Then for hope, the strong and constant hope of a glorious estate in the other world will make us deny the flesh, go through all sufferings and difficulties to attain it: Acts. xxvi. 6, 7, ‘And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.’ And so by consequence a man acteth like another kind of creature than the rest of men are, or than he himself was before.

2. The state of the gospel calleth for it; for it is a change of everything from what it was before. All things are new in the kingdom of Christ, and therefore we should be new creatures also. In the gospel there is a new Adam, which is Jesus Christ, a new covenant, a new paradise (not that where Adam enjoyed God among the beasts, but where the blessed enjoy God among the angels), a new ministry, new ordinances; and therefore we also should be new creatures, and serve God, ‘not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the spirit,’ Rom. vii. 6. We are both obliged and fitted by this new state. Since we have a new lord, a new law, all is new, there must be also a new creation; for as the general state of the church is renewed by Christ, so every particular believer ought to participate of this new estate.

3. The third argument shall be taken from the necessity of the new creation:—

[1.] In order to our present communion with God. The new creature is necessary to converse with a holy and invisible God, earnestly, frequently, reverently, and delightfully; for the effects of the new creature are life and likeness. Those that do not live the life of God are estranged from him, Eph. iv. 18. Adam was alone, though compassed about with multitude of creatures, beasts, and plants; there was none to converse with him, because they did not live his life. Trees cannot

converse with beasts, nor beasts with men, nor men with God, till they have somewhat of the same nature and life. Sense fits the plants, reason the beasts, so grace fits men. So for likeness, conformity is the ground of communion: Amos iii. 3, 'How can two walk together, except they are agreed?' Our old course made the breach between God and us: Isa. lix. 2, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' And our new life and likeness qualifieth for communion with him: 1 John. i. 6, 7, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' A holy creature may sweetly come and converse with a holy God.

[2.] In order to our service and obedience to God. Man is unfit for God's use till he be new-moulded and framed again. Observe two places: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works.' Every creature hath faculties suitable to those operations which belong to that creature. So man must be new created and new formed, that he may be prepared, fitted, and made ready for the Lord. You cannot expect new operations till there be a new life. The other place is, 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' There is a mass of corruption which remaineth as a clog upon us, which maketh us averse and indisposed for the work of God; and the soul must be purged from these lusts and inclinations to the vanities of the world, before it is meet, prepared, and made ready for the acts of holiness. Here must be our first care, to get the heart renewed. Many are troubled about this or that duty, or particular branches of the spiritual life: first get life itself, for there must be principles before there can be operations, and in vain do we expect strengthening grace before we have received renewing grace. This is like little children, who attempt to run before they can go. Many complain of this and that corruption, but they do not groan under the burden of a corrupt nature, as suppose wandering thoughts in prayer, when at the same time the heart is habitually averse and estranged from God; as if a man should complain of an aching tooth, when a mortal disease hath seized upon his vitals; of a cut finger, when at the same time he is wounded at the heart; of deadness in duty, and want of quickening grace, when they want converting grace, as if we would have the Spirit blow to a dead coal; complain of infirmities and incident weaknesses, when our habitual aversion from God is not yet cured, and of our unpreparedness for service, when we have not the general and most necessary preparation, are not yet come out of the carnal estate.

[3.] In order to our future enjoyment of God, and that glory and blessedness which we expect in his heavenly kingdom. None but new creatures are fit to enter into the new Jerusalem. It is said, John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God.' Seeing is put for enjoying. He shall not be suffered to look within the veil, much less to enter. Man neither knoweth his true happiness nor careth for it, but followeth after his old lusts till he be new moulded and framed. By nature men are opposite to the kingdom of

God, it being invisible, future, spiritual, mostly for the soul. Now men are for things seen, present, and bodily ; the interest of the flesh governeth them in all their choices and inclinations ; and how unmeet are those for heaven ! In short, our frail bodies must be changed before they can be brought to heaven—‘ We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed,’ saith the apostle. If thy body must be changed, how much more thy soul ? if that which is frail, much more that which is filthy. If bare flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven till it be freed from its corruptible qualities, certainly a guilty soul cannot enter into heaven till it be freed from its sinful qualities.

Use 1. To inform us—

1. How ill they can make out their interest in Christ that are not sensible of any change wrought in them. They have the old thoughts and old discourses, and the old passions, and the old affections, and old conversations still ; the old darkness and blindness which was upon their minds ; the old stupidity, dullness, deadness, carelessness upon their hearts, knowing nothing, regarding nothing of God ; the old end and scope governeth them, to which they formerly referred all things ; if there be a change there is some hope the Redeemer hath been at work in our hearts. You can remember how little favour you had once for the things of the Spirit ; how little mind to Christ or holiness ; how wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh or profits of the world. What a mastery your lusts had then over you, and what a hard servitude you then were in : Titus iii. 3, ‘ Serving divers lusts and pleasures.’ Is the case altered with you now ? If it be, your gust to fleshly delights is deadened, and your soul will be more taken up with the affairs of another world. The drift, aim, and bent of your lives is now for God and your salvation ; and your great business is now the pleasing of God and the saving of your souls, and now you are not servants to your fleshly appetites and senses, or things here below, but masters, lords, and conquerors over them. But in most that profess and pretend to an interest in Christ, there is no such change to be seen ; you may find their old sins and their old lusts, and the old things of ungodliness, are not yet cast off. Such rubbish and rotten building should not be left standing with the new ; old leaves in autumn fall off in the spring.

2. It informeth us in what manner we should check sin ; by remembering it is an old thing to be done away, and how ill it becometh our new state by Christ : 2 Peter i. 9, ‘ Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.’ Former sins ought to be esteemed as rags that are cast off, or vomit never to be licked up again. If we are and do profess or esteem ourselves to be pardoned, we should never build again what we have destroyed, and tear open our old wounds ; so 1 Peter i. 14. ‘ Not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance.’ We should not return to our old bondage and slavery : so 1 Cor. v. 7, ‘ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.’ The unsuitableness of it to our present state stirreth up our indignation : ‘ What have I any more to do with idols ? ’ Hosea xiv. 8. Worldly things are pleasing to the old man.

Use 2. Have we this evidence of our being in Christ, that we are made new creatures ?

1. Have we a new mind? A new creature hath a new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye, seeth more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world than ever before. Knowing things after the flesh bringeth in this discourse about the new creature in the text. A new value and esteem of things doth much discover the temper of the heart: if thou esteemest the reproach of Christ, Heb. xi. 26; esteemest the decay of the outward man, to be abundantly recompensed by the renewing of the inward, 2 Cor. iv. 16. A new creature is not only changed himself, but all things about him are changed; heaven is another thing, and earth is another thing than it was before; he looketh upon his body and soul with another eye.

2. As he hath a new mind and judgment, so the heart is new moulded. The great blessing of the covenant is a new heart. Now the heart is new when we are inclined to the ways of God, and enabled to walk in them. There is—

[1.] A new inclination, poise or weight upon the soul, bending it to holy and heavenly things. This David prayeth for: Ps. cxix. 36, ‘Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.’ And is that preparedness and readiness for every good work which the scripture speaketh of.

[2.] The heart is enabled: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ‘I will put a new spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.’ Wherefore is a new heart and a new strength of grace given, but to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear? Heb. xii. 28, ‘For the kingdom of God standeth not in word, but power.’

[3.] New actions or a new conversation, called ‘walking in newness of life,’ Rom. vii. 4. A christian is another man. There is not only a difference between him and others, but him and himself. He must needs be so; for he hath (1.) A new principle—the Spirit of God. As their own flesh before, John iii. 6, now his heart is suited to the law of God: Heb. viii. 10, ‘I will put my law into their minds, and write them on their hearts;’ and Eph. iv. 24, ‘And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.’ (2.) A new rule; and therefore there must be a new way and course: Gal. vi. 15, 16, ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;’ and Ps. i. 2, ‘But his delight is in the law of God; and in that law doth he meditate day and night.’ As their internal principle of operation is different, so the external rule of their conversations is different. Others walk according to the course of this world, or their own lusts: Rom xii. 2, ‘And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.’ (3.) A new design and end: are taken off from carnal and earthly things to spiritual and heavenly things, to seek after God and their own salvation. The renewed, being called to the hope of eternal life, look after God and heaven, to serve, please and glorify God.

SERMON XXXIII.

*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.—
2 COR. v. 18.*

IN this verse the doctrine of the new creature is further prosecuted with respect to the apostle's scope, which is to assert his fidelity in the ministry. For here are three things laid down—

1. The efficient cause of all is God.
2. The meritorious cause is Jesus Christ.
3. The instrumental cause is the word.

[1.] The original author of all gospel grace—‘ And all things are of God;’ τὰ δὲ πάντα, all these things. He doth not speak of universal creation, but of the peculiar grace of regeneration. It is God that maketh all things new in the church, and formeth his people after his own image.

[2.] The meritorious cause; how cometh God to be so kind to us? We were his enemies. The apostle telleth us here, as elsewhere, he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ: Rom. v. 10, ‘ When we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son.’ So that we have the new creature by virtue of our reconciliation with God, as pacified in Christ towards the elect, when our cause was desperate; there was no other way to recover us.

[3.] The instrumental cause, or means of application, is the ministry of reconciliation, which was given to the apostles and other preachers of the gospel. God is the author of grace, and Christ is the means to bring us and God together, and the ministers have an office, power, and commission to bring us and Christ together. And so Paul had a double obligation to constancy and fidelity in his office: his personal reconciliation, which was common to him with other christians; and a ministerial delegation and trust to reconcile others to Christ.

Two points will be discoursed in this verse—

1. That God is the original author of the new creature, and all things which belong thereto.

2. That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us by Christ.

First, Let me insist upon the first point, and prove to you that renovation is the proper work of God, and the sole effect of his Spirit. That will appear—

1. From the state of the person who is to be reconciled and renewed. The object of this renovation is a sinner lying in a state of defection from God, and under a loss of original righteousness, averse from God, yea, an enemy to him, prone to all evil, weak, yea, dead to all spiritual good; and how can such an one renew and convert himself to God? It is true man hath some reason left, and may have some confused notions and general apprehensions of things good and evil, pleasing and displeasing to God, but the very apprehensions are maimed and imperfect, and they often call good evil, and evil good,

and put light for darkness, and darkness for light, Isa. v. 10. However, to choose the one and leave the other, that is not in their power. They may have loose desires of spiritual favours, especially as apprehended under the quality of a natural good, or as separate from the means: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Oh that I may die the death of the righteous !' They may long for the death of the righteous, though loath to live their life. That excellency which they discover in spiritual things is apprehended in a natural way : John vi. 36, 'And they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.' But these desires are neither truly spiritual, nor serious, nor constant, nor laborious. So that to apprehend or seek after spiritual things in a spiritual manner is above their reach and power. Neither if we consider what man is in his natural estate ; this work must needs come of God. Man is blind in his mind, perverse in his will, rebellious in his affections ; what sound part is there in us left to mend the rest ? Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome flesh ? No ; our Lord telleth you, John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh ;' and his apostle, Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Can a man by his own mere strength be brought to abhor what he dearly loveth ? and he that 'drinketh in iniquity like water,' Job xv. 16, of his own accord be brought to loathe sin, and expel and drive it from him ? On the other side, will he be ever brought to love what he abhorreth ? Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, and is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be.' There is enmity in an unrenewed heart, till grace remove it. Can we that are worldly, wholly led by sense, look for all our happiness in an unseen world, till we receive another spirit ? The scripture will tell you no : 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit ;' and 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things (viz., faith and other graces) is blind, and cannot see afar off.' What man of his own accord will deny present things, and lay up his hopes in heaven ? Let that rare phoenix be once produced; and then we may think of changing our opinion, and lay aside the doctrine of supernatural grace. Can a stony heart of itself become tender ? Ezek. xxxvi. 26 ; or a dead heart quicken itself ? Eph. ii. 5. Then there were no need of putting ourselves to the pains and trouble of seeking all from above, and waiting upon God with such seriousness and care.

2: From the nature of this work. It is called a new creation in the 17th verse, and Eph. ii. 10, and elsewhere. Now, creation is a work of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation. In the beginning God made some things out of nothing, and some things *ex inhabili materia*—out of foregoing matter ; but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it ; as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of the rib of man. Now take the notion in the former and latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance, and he only that calleth the things that are not as though they were, can only raise the one out of the other, he indeed can speak light out of darkness, 2 Cor. iv. 6 ; life out of death, something out of nothing, 2 Peter i. 3. By the divine power all things are given to us, which

are necessary to life and godliness. He challengeth this work as his own, as belonging to his infinite power, to give grace to a graceless soul. Or, if you will take the latter notion, creation out of unfit matter ; he maketh those that were wholly indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would bring them to it, to be lovers of holiness and godliness, and followers of it. God that made man at first must renew him, and restore him to that image he lost : Col. iii. 10, ‘ Restored to the image of him that created him,’ and Eph. iv. 24, ‘ Created after God.’ His work must be acknowledged in it, and looked upon as a great work, not as a low, natural, or common thing, otherwise you disparage the great benefit of the new creation.

3. From its connection with reconciliation. We can no more convert ourselves than reconcile ourselves to God. Renewing and reconciling grace are often spoken of together, as in the text, and often folded up in the same expression, as going *pari passu* : 1 Peter iii. 18. ‘ Bring us to God,’ as being obtained both together ; Acts v. 31, ‘ Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins ;’ and 1 Cor. vi. 11, ‘ And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ And both are received from the same hand by virtue of the same merit. Well then, there must be a supernatural work upon us, to cure our unholiness, as well as a supernatural work without us, to overcome our guiltiness. The same person that merited the one by the value of his blood and sufferings, must apply the other by the almighty power of his grace. And we needed the Son of God to be a fountain of life, as well as the ransom for our souls ; and it is for the honour of our Redeemer that our whole and entire recovery should be ascribed to him, not part only, as the freedom from guilt, but the whole freedom from the power of sin ; and that he might be a complete saviour to us. It is not sufficient only that he be a prophet or a lawgiver, to give sufficient precepts, directions, and rules for the sanctification and renovation of our natures, and propound sufficient encouragements and motives in the promise of eternal life ; nor that he should be priest only to offer a sacrifice for the expiation of our sin ; but also be a fountain of light and grace, to renew God’s image upon the soul. As none but Christ is able to satisfy God’s justice for us, so none but Christ is able to change the heart of man : Job xiv. 4, ‘ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Not one.’ This work would cease for ever, as well as the other part of the ransom and redemption of our souls. He had this in his eye when he died for us : Eph. v. 25, 26, ‘ Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ;’ and Titus ii. 14, ‘ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.’ And he purchased this power into his own hands, not into another’s, and sendeth forth his conquering and prevailing Spirit to bring back the souls of men to God. And therefore, if this part of our salvation be not ascribed to Christ, you rob him of his choicest glory ; for to sanctify is more than to pardon.

4. From the effect of this renovation, which is the implantation of the three graces, faith, hope, and love, which are our light, life, and power. In the new nature faith is our light, because by it we see things otherwise than we did before. We see God: Heb. xi. 26, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' We see Christ: John vi. 40, 'That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' They see such an excellency in him that all other things are but dung and dross in comparison of him. They see heaven and spiritual things, and things to come: Heb. xi. 1, 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;' and Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Faith is the eye of the new creature that giveth us another sight of things than we had before. Without it we cannot see these things, 2 Peter i. 9. We understand what is good for back and belly; we see things at hand, but cannot see things afar off. Then love is as it were the heart of the new creature, the seat of life, or wherein the new bent and inclination to what is good and holy doth most discover itself. We are never converted till God hath our love; for grace is a victorious suavity or complacency. God in conversion acteth so powerfully, that his purpose is accomplished. He acts upon the will of man with so much energy that he mastereth it, and yet with so much sweetness that his power maketh us a willing people, Ps. cx. 3. That is, he gaineth our love, and then nothing he doth or saith is grievous, 1 John v. 3. Healing grace worketh mainly by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and causing us to love him again. The sensitive delectation, which formerly captivated the will, is subdued, and the soul is brought to delight in God as our chief good; so that grace, which is light in the understanding, is pleasure in the will. There is a powerful love which maketh our duty easy and agreeable to us. Then hope that is our strength, for the sense of the other world, where we shall have what we believe and desire at the fullest rate of enjoyment, doth fortify the heart against present temptations, the sorrows of the world, and the delights of sense. The soul is weak when our expectation is cold and languid; strong, when the heart is most in heaven; our moral and spiritual strength lieth in the heavenly mind. It is our anchor and helmet. Now all these graces are of God. The scripture is express both for faith, which giveth us a new sight of things: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God'; and love, which giveth us a new bent and inclination, or that victorious suavity which gently mastereth the will by its affectionate allurements, or pleasingly ravisheth the heart: 1 John iv. 7, 'Let us love one another, for love is of God.' This holy fire is only kindled by a sunbeam; and hope is of the same extract and original: Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That heavenly frame that maintaineth comfort in our souls in the midst of the tumults and confusions of the present world, it is wrought in us by the Spirit: these graces, as they are created after God, so created by God. After God;

after his image. Wisdom, power and goodness are the three great attributes to which answer light, life and power, or, which is all one, faith, hope and love; faith as the eye, and love as the heart. This life is received by faith, and acted in love. Hope as the strength; and reason sheweth it as well as scripture. Faith we cannot have of ourselves, for by sense we only see things that are before us. By reason things future, as they are contained in their causes, may be seen, if nothing hinder, but things spiritual, invisible, and wholly future, cannot be seen with any certainty, but in God's light, as he revealeth the object and openeth the faculty. Love we cannot have of ourselves, for man being a fleshly creature, his love accommodateth itself to the interests of his flesh. Suppose it to be placed like a needle between two loadstones, between God and the world, surely it will be drawn away by what is strongest and nearest. Self-love, being guided by concupiscence, tendeth towards the creature, till it be mastered by grace. Those pleasures which enter into the soul by the gate of the senses will corrupt our love, till an higher pleasure, let in by the understanding divinely enlightened, and into the will, draw it another way; for before the understanding is dazzled with false light, or obscured by real darkness, that it can hardly discern good from evil. Such is the treachery of the senses, and revolt of the passions; and the will, perverted by concupiscence, hath no inclination but to what is evil. Hope which floweth from love that cannot be; for till God be our chiefest good, how shall we seek and long for the time when we shall fully enjoy him, with any life, seriousness and comfort?

5. All things belonging to the new creature the scripture ascribeth to God. Take that noted place, Phil. ii. 13, 'For God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;' all that we will and all that we do in the spiritual life is of God. Mark here—

[1.] He did not only give us the natural faculties at first. God, as the author of nature, must be distinguished from God as the author of grace; that is another sphere and order of beings; it is one thing to make us men, another thing to make us saints or christians. We have understanding, will, and affections, and senses, as men, but we are sanctified as christians: 1 John v. 20, 'He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.'

[2.] God doth not only concur to the exercise of these faculties, as a general cause, as he doth to all the creatures, Acts xvii. 28. We cannot stir nor move without him; general providential assistance is necessary to all things, or else they could not subsist; as the fire could not burn the three children, though he did not destroy the being or property of it, only suspend his influence. So God is said to give the seeing eye and the hearing ear; not only the rational faculty, but the exercise: but this is not enough; as the act is from God, so the graciousness of the act.

[3.] To come more closely to the thing in hand. God doth not only work merely by helping the will, but giving us the will, not by curing the weakness of it, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sinfulness of it, and sweetly drawing it to himself. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation, outward or inward, would serve the turn; but it is stark dead; they do but flatter

nature that say of it as Christ of the damsel—‘She is not dead but sleepeth.’ God’s grace is not only necessary for facilitation, that we may more easily choose and pursue that which is good; as a horse is requisite, that a man may pass over his journey more easily, which otherwise he might do on foot with difficulty. No, it is impossible, as well as difficult, till God giveth us the will and the deed.

[4.] God doth not only give a power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but he giveth to will and to do, the act of willing and doing. Adam had *posse quod velle*, but we have *velle quod possumus*—he had a power to avoid sin if he would, but we have the will itself; but he worketh powerfully and efficaciously, that is to say, the effect succeedeth: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ‘A new heart will I give to you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.’ If this were all the grace given to us for Christ’s sake, that we might be converted if we would, divers absurdities would follow.

(1.) That Christ died at uncertainties, and it is in the power and pleasure of man’s will to ratify and frustrate the end of his death; for it is a contingent thing whether a man will turn to God, yea or no. No, it is not so left; it doth not depend upon man’s mutable will: John vi. 37, ‘All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.’

(2.) Man would be the principal cause of his own conversion, and so would rob God of the glory of his free grace, and put the honour of it on the liberty of man’s will; for grace giveth an indifference, he may or he may not; but free will hath the casting voice. A power to repent or believe he hath from God, but the determining act is from himself, which is more noble; for he doth more that doth will and work, than he that giveth a power to will and work; as it is a more perfect thing to understand than to be able to understand; the act is more perfect than the power; *actus secundus est nobilior quam primus*. We should then expect from God no other grace but a power to repent and believe; but it is left to our wills to make it effectual or frustrate; is this all? No; God doth not only give a power to believe, but faith; a power to repent, but repentance itself; not such grace as is effectual only as man’s will is pleased to use it, or not to use it, but victorious grace, such as conquereth the heart of man, and sweetly subdueth it to God.

(3.) Look to the prayers of the faithful dispersed everywhere in the holy scriptures, and they understand this of effectual grace: ‘Create in me a clean heart,’ saith David, Ps. li. 10; and Paul prayed, Heb. xiii. 21, ‘The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.’ Grace effectual by itself is prayed for, not a grace that giveth the possibility only, but the effect; not only such as doth invite and solicit us to good, but such as doth incline and determine us to good.

(4.) This grace we give thanks for; not for a power to repent and believe, but for repentance and faith itself to be wrought in us. Put it into the instance of Peter and Judas. For otherwise God would do no more for Peter than for Judas, if God did only give a power to will, if we please to do it, so man would difference himself, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Then Peter no more than Judas, and Judas as much as Peter; Lord, I thank thee that thou hast given me some supernatural help, namely,

a power to return to thee, if I will. And the like help thou hast given to my fellow disciple Judas, but this I have added of mine own accord, a will to return and be converted. And though I have received no more than he, yet I have done more than he, since I have accepted grace, and he remaineth in sin. I owe no more to thy grace than Judas did; but I have done more for thy glory than Judas did.

(5.) Our first choice and willing the things of God, is not only given us, but our willing and working when we are converted. Grace is no less necessary to finish than to begin; and the new state dependeth absolutely on its influence from first to last—‘He worketh all our works for us.’

There is not one individual act of grace but God is interested in it, as the soul is in every member; there is not only a constant union by virtue of their subsistence in the body, but there is a constant animation and influence, and the members of the body have no power to move, but as they are moved and acted by the soul. So grace is two-fold; habitual, which giveth the christian his supernatural being: 2 Peter i. 4, ‘Who hath made us partakers of the divine nature;’ and actual, which raiseth and quickeneth them in their operations. To this sense must these places be interpreted: John xv. 5, ‘He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing;’ and 2 Cor. iii. 5, ‘Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, but our sufficiency is of God.’ You will say then, What difference is there between the regenerate and unregenerate, a natural man and a new creature?

I answer, there is somewhat in them which may be called a new life, and a new nature, somewhat distinct from Christ, or the Spirit of Christ that worketh in them; there is the habits of grace, or the seed of God, 1 John iii. 9; which cannot be Christ, or the Spirit, for it is a created gift: Ps. li. 10, ‘Create in me a clean heart.’ This is called sometimes the divine nature, sometimes the new creature, sometimes the inward man, sometimes the good treasure, Mat. xii. 35; a stock of grace which may be increased: 2 Peter iii. 18, ‘But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ All which are not compatible to the Spirit, so that when the Spirit worketh on us, it is in another manner than on the regenerate. At first conversion we are mere objects of grace, but afterwards instruments of grace; first upon us, and then by us. He worketh in the regenerate and unregenerate in a different manner; he works on the unregenerate while they do nothing that is good, yea the contrary; the regenerate he helpeth not unless working, striving, labouring; there is an inclination towards God and holy things which he quickeneth and raiseth up.

(6.) In the same action, unless God continueth his assistance, we fail and wax faint, for God doth not only give us the will, that is, the desire and purpose, but the grace by which we do that good which we will and purpose to do; these two are distinct, to will and to do. And we may have assistance in one kind, and not in another; willing and doing are different; for Paul saith, Rom. vii. 18, ‘To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.’ There needeth grace for that also. To will is more than to think, and

to exert our will into action is more than both; in all we need God's help. We cannot think a good thought, nor conceive a holy purpose, much less perform a good action; so that we need renewed strength every moment. The heart of man is very mutable in the same duty, and we can keep up our affections no longer than God is pleased to hold them up. While the influence of grace is strong upon us, the heart is kept in a warm, holy frame; but as that abateth, the heart swerveth, and returneth to sin and vanity; instance in Peter, *se posse putabat quod se velle sentiebat.*

Use 1. Let us apply this.

1. Take heed of an abuse of this doctrine. Let it not lull us asleep in idleness, because God must do all, we must do nothing; this is an abuse; the Spirit of God reasoneth otherwise: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.' Work, for God worketh; it cannot be a ground of looseness or laziness to the regenerate or unregenerate.

[1.] Not to the unregenerate; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation. A drunken servant is a servant, and bound to do his work, though he hath disabled himself; it is no reason the master should lose his right by the servant's default. Again, God's doing all is an engagement to us to wait upon him in the use of means, that we meet with God in his way, and he may meet with us in our way.

(1.) That we may meet with God in his way, God hath appointed certain duties to convey and apply his grace. We are to lie at the pool till the waters be stirred, to continue our attendance till God giveth grace: Mark iv. 24, 'Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.' As you measure to God in duties, so will God measure to you in blessings.

(2.) That God may meet with us in our way, God influenceth all things according to their natural inclination. God enlighteneth with the sun, burneth with the fire, reasoneth with man, acts necessarily with necessary causes, and freely with free causes; he doth not oppress the liberty of the creature, but preserveth the nature and interest of his workmanship, draweth men with the cords of a man, Hos. xi. 4. He propoundeth reasons, which we consider, and so betake ourselves to a godly course. The object of regeneration is a reasonable creature, upon whom he worketh not as upon a stock or a stone, and maketh use of the faculties which they have, showing us our lost estate, and the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of Christ's grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, and lead us in the way of holiness unto eternal life. Now these means we are to attend upon.

[2.] Not to the regenerate. Partly because they have some principles of operation, there is life in them; and where there is life, there is a principle and power to act, or else God's most precious gifts would be in vain; and therefore it is their duty to rouse and quicken themselves: 2 Tim. i. 6, 'That thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee'; and Isa. lxiv. 7, 'No man stirreth up himself to seek after God.' We have understanding and memory sanctified and planted with a stock of divine knowledge, to revive truths upon the conscience:

And partly, because God's children are never so deserted but that there is some help from God. There are *auxilia necessaria*. Some liberal and plentiful aids of grace which may be suspended. But that grace which is simply and absolutely necessary is still vouchsafed. Therefore they are more inexcusable. If the wicked man that had but one talent be taxed for being a lazy and slothful servant, Mat. xxv, much more the regenerate that hath three talents—a reasonable nature, grace habitual, and such actual help as is absolutely necessary. And partly, because to neglect duty is to resist grace, and run away from our strength. God hath promised to be with us whilst we are doing : 1 Chron. xxii. 6, 'Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.' David's silence, and keeping off from God, did him no good. When the eunuch was reading, and knew not what to make of it, God sent him an interpreter, Acts viii.

2. It is an abuse to think the exhortation in vain, to press people to become new creatures. It is not in vain :—

[1.] That man may own his duty, and be sensible of the necessity of the change of his estate, who would otherwise be altogether careless and mindless of such a thing, a duty which must be speedily and earnestly gone about, if they mean to be saved. The exhortation is a demanding of God's right, and maketh the creature sensible of his own obligation, that he may take care of this work as well as he can ; at least, that he may acknowledge the debt, and confessing our impotency, beg grace.

[2.] God requireth it of us, that he may work it in us ; he worketh by requiring, for evangelical exhortations carry their own blessing with them : John xi. 43, 'Lazarus, come forth ;' there went a power and efficacy with the words to raise him from the dead. So Mat. xii. 13, 'Stretch forth thine hand ;' there was the difficulty, but the man found help in stretching forth his hand.

[3.] The exhortation is not in vain, because there are some things to be done before this ; renovation is in order thereunto, as wood is dried before it is kindled. There are some preparations to conversion, and we are to be active about them, as that we should rouse up ourselves : Ps. xxii. 27, 'The ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord ;' and Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Man is very inconsiderate, his soul is asleep till consideration awakens it, he is to try his own estate whether good or bad : Lam. iii. 40, 'Search and try your ways, and turn unto the Lord.' To set himself to seek after God in the best fashion he can, Hos. v. 4. They will not frame their doings, nor think of recovering themselves, nor bending their course that way.

[4.] The exhortation is not in vain, that men may not hinder God's work, and obstruct their own mercies, and render themselves more unapt to be changed. God taketh notice they would not observe his checks : Prov. i. 23, 'They set at nought my counsel, and would not turn at my reproofs.' Sometimes conscience boggleth, either as excited by the word—'Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25 ; or some notable affliction or strait, Gen. xlvi. 21. By one means or other the waters are stirred ; great helps are vouchsafed to us ; not to observe these seasons is a great loss.

Use 2. What is the true use to be made of this doctrine?

1. To make us sensible that it is a hard task to get the change of the new creature. If you have mean thoughts of this work, you lessen your obligation to God for your cure by the grace of your Redeemer; believing your disease light, you think your remedy easy, and so cannot be thankful for your recovery, if you lessen your sickness. And besides, it will lessen your care, and make you vain and negligent; you will not beg it of God so heartily, if you do not think this work to be what it is. Therefore, in the first place, you must be convinced of the difficulty of it.

2. To check despair. Many when they hear they must be new men in all things, conceit they shall never be able to reach it. Surely Christ can change thy heart, Mat. xix. 26; he can make thee a new creature; he that can turn water into wine can also turn lions into lambs.

3. To keep us humble—‘For all things are of God. What have we that we have not received?’ 1 Cor. iv. 7. We have all by gift, and if we be proud, it is that we are more in debt than others. Let us not intercept God’s honour.

4. To make us thankful. Give God the praise of changing thy nature, if from a bad man thou art become good. He looketh for it, for his great end is to exalt the glory of his grace. Now let us ascribe all to him; it was he at first that gave us those permanent and fixed habits which constitute the new nature, he furnisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in us. It is he that exciteth and perfecteth our actions; therefore put the crown still upon grace’s head: Luke xix. 16, ‘Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;’ Gal. ii. 20, ‘Not I, but Christ that liveth in me;’ 1 Cor. xv. 10, ‘Not I, but the grace of God which was in me.’ When we have done and suffered most, we must say, Of thine own have we given thee.

5. If all things are from God, let us love God in Christ the more, and live to him; it worketh upon our love, when we see how much we are beholden to him, and our love should direct all things to his glory: Rom. xi. 36, ‘For all things are of him, and through him, and to him.’ What is from him must be used for him. Our new being should be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 12. Glorify him in deed as well as word.

6. Live in a cheerful and continual dependence upon God for that grace which is necessary, for our continual dependence doth engage us to constant communion with God. If we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father; the throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God wouldest seldom hear from us. Therefore God would keep grace in his own hands, to oblige us to a continual intercourse with him. A cheerful dependence; for God is able and ready to help the waiting soul, and hath engaged his faithfulness to give us necessary and effectual grace to preserve the new life: 1 Cor. i. 9, ‘God is faithful, by whom ye are called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;’ 1 Thes. v. 24. I will conclude with the words of Austin—*Job in stercore, &c.—Job was*

more happy in his misery than Adam in his innocence ; he was victorious on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne ; he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced Adam. He despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation. He preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocence in the midst of paradise. Therefore let us comfort ourselves in the grace we have by Christ in the new covenant.

Secondly, That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us in Christ.

1. He would not give this benefit till justice be satisfied ; not set up man with a new stock till there was satisfaction made for the breach of the old. Christ hath pacified God for us, and all grace floweth from this, that God is become a God of peace to us : Heb. xiii. 20, ‘The God of peace make you perfect ;’ so 1 Thes. v. 23, ‘The God of peace sanctify you throughout.’ While God is angry, there is no hope to receive any gift of grace from him. The Holy Spirit is the gift of his love, the fruit of his peace and reconciliation ; God is only the God of peace, as satisfied by Christ’s death—‘The chastisement of our peace was upon him,’ Isa. liii. 5.

2. God is never actually reconciled to us, nor we to him, till he give us the regenerating Spirit ; that is receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 11. Nothing but the new creature will evidence his special favour. Therefore it is said, Rom. v. 5, ‘Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.’ Other things may be given us during his anger, yea, they may be given in anger, but the regenerating Spirit is never given in anger.

3. We are so far renewed by this reconciliation, that in some respects we are upon better terms than we were in innocence, before the breach ; namely, as God giveth us effectual grace, not only such grace to stand if we will, or obey if we will, but whereby we are effectually enabled to obey and persevere.

Use. 1. Let us seek after this reconciliation with God by Christ ; then we may comfortably look to obtain every good thing at his hands. Sense of guilt is our first motive on our parts, and reconciliation beginneth all on God’s part. Surely God is willing to be reconciled, because he hath laid such a foundation for it in the death of Christ ; why else hath he appointed a ministry of reconciliation, but to call upon us to cast away the weapons of our defiance, and to enter into his peace ?

2. It sheweth us how much we are obliged to Jesus Christ, who by his death hath satisfied God’s justice, and merited all the mercies promised ; the promises themselves ; for he is given for a covenant, that is, the foundation of it, the terms and conditions, the power to perform them, the ministry by which this peace is conveyed to us ; he first preached peace : Eph. ii. 7, ‘Having slain enmity by his cross.’

3. Let no breach fall out between God and you, lest it stop grace ; the continual sanctification and perfection of man once regenerate, cometh from the God of peace, dependeth upon this reconciliation, as well as the first renovation, God’s sanctifying power, and the abode of his Spirit, is still necessary to renew us more and more.

SERMON XXXIV.

To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 Cor. v. 19.

THE apostle, having mentioned reconciliation in the former verse, doth now enforce, amplify, and explain it, and insist upon it in this and the following verses. Here you have three things—

1. The sum and substance of the gospel, or the way on God's part—*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*
2. The fruit of this reconciliation—*Not imputing their trespasses to them.*
3. The means of application, or bringing it about on man's part—*Θεμένος ἐν ἡμῖν, ‘placed in us.’*

For the first clause, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself ;’ this is the sum of the whole gospel. There is more glory in this one line, than in the great volume of the whole creation ; there we may read God infinite and glorious in his majesty and power, but here in his wisdom and grace. A God reconciled should be welcome news to the fallen creature. Reconciliation is good in any case. The misery of the world cometh from the differences and disappointments which are in the world. How happy were we, if all differences were taken up between man and man, much more between God and man ; if heaven and earth were once at an agreement. We are at a loss how to make up our breaches with one another ; it is easy to open the flood-gates, and let out the waters of strife ; but to set things at rights again, and to reduce every stream into its proper channel, who hath the skill to do that ? If we could once compose our own differences by compromise, yet to take up the quarrel between us and God is not so easy ; though men and angels had joined in consultation about a way and project how to bring it to pass, we had still been to seek ; but when man was at an utter loss, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’

In the words observe—

[1.] A privilege—*Reconciliation*, which is a returning to grace and favour after a breach.

[2.] The author of the design—God the Father, who in the mystery of redemption is the highest judge and wronged party. ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’

[3.] The means—*In Christ.* Reconciliation is considerable either as to the purchase or application of it. As to the purchase, ‘God was in Christ reconciling ;’ God hath used Christ as a means to make peace between him and us, Col. i. 20. The application, God is in Christ reconciling by virtue of our union with him ; in Christ, God that was formerly far from us is come nigh to us, and in Christ we draw nigh to God ; in him we meet, and we in him, and he is in us.

[4.] The parties interested—on the one hand, *the world* ; on the other—*To himself.*

(1.) ‘The world.’ The expression is used indefinitely, though not

universally—First, the world, to show that men, and not angels, 2 Peter ii. 4; the sinning angels had no mediator nor reconciler. Secondly, to note which is the ground of the gospel tendry; John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.’ Thirdly, to represent the freeness of God’s grace: 1 John v. 19, ‘And, we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;’—this world, that lay in sin was, God reconciling. In themselves, God’s elect differ nothing from the rest of the world till grace prevent them; they were as bad as any in the world, of the same race of cursed mankind, not only living in the world, but after the fashions of the world; ‘dead in trespasses and sins,’ and obnoxious to the curse and wrath of God. Fourthly, to show the amplitude of God’s grace, the greater and worse part of the world, the Gentiles as well as the Jews: Rom. xi. 15, ‘If the casting away of them be the reconciling the world,’ so 1 John ii. 2, ‘And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.’ Fifthly, to awaken all that are concerned to look after this privilege, which is common to all nations; the offer is made indifferently to all sorts of persons where the gospel cometh; and this grace is effectually applied to all the elect of all nations, and all sorts and conditions and ranks of persons in the world. If thou art a member of the world, thou shouldst not receive this grace in vain.

(2.) The other party concerned is the great God, ‘to himself.’ To be reconciled to one another, when we have smarted sufficiently under the fruits of our differences, will be found an especial blessing, much more to be reconciled to God. This is the comfort here propounded, ‘to himself,’ of whom we stand so much in dread, 1 Sam. ii. 15: ‘If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against God, who shall plead for him?’ A fit umpire and mediator may be found out in matters of difference and plea between man and man, but who shall arbitrate and take up the difference between us and God? Here, first, the greatness of the privilege, That God will reconcile us to himself.

Doct. There is a reconciliation made in and by Jesus Christ between God and man.

First. I shall premise three things in general—

First. That to reconcile is to bring into favour and friendship after some breach made and offence taken; as Luke xxiii. 12, ‘The same day Herod and Pilate were made friends, for before they were at enmity between themselves.’ So Joseph and his brethren were made friends; and the woman faulty is said to be reconciled to her husband, 1 Cor. vii. 11; so Mat. v. 23, 24, ‘If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, go thy way and be reconciled to thy brother.’ All which places prove the natural notion of the word; and so it is fitly used for our recovery and returning into grace and favour with God after a breach.

Secondly. That the reconciliation is mutual; God is reconciled to us, and we to God. Many will not hear that God is reconciled to us, but only that we are reconciled to God; but certainly there must be both; God was angry with us, and we hated God; the alienation was mutual, and therefore the reconciliation must be so. The scripture

speaketh not only of an enmity and hatred on man's part : Rom. v. 10, 'For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ;' but also of wrath on God's part, not only against sin but the sinner : Eph. ii. 3, 'Being children of wrath by nature.' Certainly God doth not only hate sin, but is angry with the wicked because of it : Ps. vii. 11, 'God is angry with the wicked every day.' And we must distinguish between the work of Christ in order to God, and the work of the minister, and Christ by the ministry, in order to men. The work of Christ in order to God, which is to appease the wrath of God ; therefore it is said ; Heb. ii. 17, 'That he is a merciful and faithful high priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,' *ἱλαστήρας*. Surely there God's being reconciled to us is intended by Christ's sacrifice and intercession ; for Christ as an high priest hath to deal with us as God's apostle with men : Heb. iii. 1, 'We in Christ's stead pray you to be reconciled,' ver. 20 ; besides, our reconciliation is made the fruit of Christ's death, in contradiction to his life, Rom. v. 10. The death of Christ mainly respected the appeasing of the wrath of God ; whereas, if it only implied the changing of our natures, it might as well be ascribed to his life in heaven as his death upon earth. Again, the scripture maketh this reconciliation to be a great instance of God's love to us. Now, if it did only consist in laying aside our enmity to God, it would rather be an instance of our love to God than his love to us. Once more, the text is plain that God's reconciling the world to himself did consist in not imputing our trespasses to us, his laying aside his suit and just plea he had against us ; so that it relateth to him. Therefore upon the whole we may pronounce that God is reconciled to us, as well as we to God. Indeed, the scriptures do more generally insist upon our being reconciled to God than God's being reconciled to us ; for two reasons—1. Because we are in a fault. It is the usual way of speaking amongst men ; he that offendeth is said to be reconciled, because he was the cause of the breach ; he needeth to reconcile himself and to appease him whom he hath offended, which the innocent party needeth not—he needeth only to forgive, and to lay aside his just anger. We offended God, not he us ; therefore the scripture usually saith, We are reconciled to God. 2. We have the benefit. It is no profit to God that the creature enters into his peace ; he is happy within himself without our love or service, only we are undone if we are not upon good terms with him. If any believe not, 'the wrath of God abideth upon him,' John iii. 36 ; and that is enough to make us eternally miserable.

Thirdly, That reconciliation in scripture is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, sometimes to Christ as mediator, sometimes to believers themselves—

1. To God the Father, as in the text, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself ;' and in the verse before the text, 'Who hath reconciled us to himself ;' and Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself,' to God the Father, as the primary cause of our reconciliation. He found out and appointed the means, as he decreed from everlasting to restore the elect fallen into sin unto grace and favour, and prepared whatever

was necessary to compose and take up the difference between him and sinners.

2. Christ is said to reconcile, Eph. ii. 16: ‘That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross;’ and Col. i. 21, ‘Yet now hath he reconciled;’ not as the primary, but meritorious cause of reconciliation, which respects both God and us; chiefly God, as he was appeased by the merit of his sacrifice, as he procured the Spirit, that same Spirit whereby our enmity might be overcome, and we might yield up ourselves to God, to love and serve and please him, for we by his blood ‘are purged from dead works, that we might serve the living God,’ Heb. ix. 14.

3. Believers are said to reconcile themselves to God: 2 Cor. v. 20, ‘We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God;’ as they do embrace the offered benefit, and lay aside their enmity, and love God that loveth them, and devote themselves to his use and service.

Secondly, More particularly, I shall do three things—(1.) State the foregoing breach. (2.) Show you the nature of this reconciliation. (3.) Show you how Christ is concerned in it.

1. To state the foregoing breach, take these propositions.

[1.] God and man were once near friends. Adam was the Lord’s favourite. You know till man was made, it is said of every rank and species of the creature, ‘God saw that it was good.’ But when man was made in his day: Gen. i. 31, ‘God saw what he had made, and behold, it was very good.’ An object of special love, God expressed more of his favour to him than to any other creature, except the angels—‘Man was made after his image,’ Gen. i. 26. When you make the image or picture of a man, you do not draw his feet or his hands, but his face; his tract or footprint may be found among the creatures, but his image and express resemblance with man; and so he was fitted to live in delightful communion with his creator. Man was his viceroy, Gen. i. 27. God entrusted him with the care, charge, and dominion over all the creatures; yea, he was capable of loving, knowing, or enjoying God. Other creatures were capable of glorifying God, of setting forth his power, wisdom, and goodness, objectively and passively; but man, of glorifying God actively, as being appointed to be the mouth of the creation.

[2.] Man gets out of God’s favour by conspiring with God’s grand enemy. His condition was happy but mutable, before Satan by insinuating with him draweth him into rebellion against God; and upon this rebellion he forfeiteth all his privileges, God’s image, favour, and fellowship. God would deal with him in the way of a covenant: Gen. ii. 17, ‘In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;’ do and live, sin and die. The comminatory part is only expressed, because that only took place; so that by this rebellion he lost the integrity of his nature, and all his happiness; he first ran away from God, and then God drove him away; he was first a fugitive, and then an exile.

[3.] Man fallen draweth all his posterity along with him; for God dealt not with him as a single but as a public person: Rom. v. 13, ‘Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,

and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned ;' and 1 Cor. xv. 47, 'The first man is of the earth, earthly ; the second man is the Lord from heaven.' There is a first man and a second man, *nos omnes eramus in illo unus homo.* Adam and Jesus are the two great institutions, the one consistent with the wisdom and justice of God, as the other with the wisdom and grace of God ; so that Adam begets enemies to God : Gen. v. 3, 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness ;' and 1 Cor. xv. 49, we read of the image of 'the earthly one.' Every man is born an enemy to God—his nature opposite, his ways contrary to God ; and so is eternally lost and undone, unless God make some other provision for him.

[4.] The condition of every man by nature is to be a stranger and an enemy to God : Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds.' That double notion is to be considered. Strangers, there is no communion between God and us, we cannot delight in God nor God in us, till there be a greater suitableness, or a divine nature put into us. If that be too soft a notion, the next will help it—we are enemies. There is a perfect contrariety, we are perfectly opposite to God in nature and ways ; we are enemies directly or formally, and in effect or by interpretation. Formally men are enemies, open or secret ; open are those that bid open defiance to him, as pagans and infidels, and idolaters ; secret, so are all sinners ; their hopes and desires are 'that there were no God,' they would fain have God out of their way ; rather than part with their lusts, they would part with their God : Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' It is a pleasing thought and supposition that there were no God. In effect and by interpretation, they do things or leave things undone, contrary to God's will, and take part with their sins against him ; as love is a love of duty and subjection, so hatred is a refusal of obedience—'Love me and keep my commandments,' Exod. xx. 6. They are angry with those who would plead God's interests with them. But how can men hate God, who is *summum bonum et fons boni?* The schoolmen put the question. We hate him not as a creator and preserver, but as a law-giver and judge : as a law-giver, because we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and security by reason of his restraint. God hath interposed by his law against our desires : Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' As a judge and avenger of sin ; not only desire of carnal liberty, but slavish fear is the cause of this enmity. Men hate those whom they fear. We have wronged God exceedingly, and we know that he will call us to an account ; we are his debtors, and cannot answer the demands of his justice, and therefore we hate him. What comfort is it to a guilty prisoner to tell him that his judge is a discreet person, or of a staid judgment ? he is one that will condemn him. A condemning God can never be loved by a guilty creature, as barely apprehended under that notion.

[5.] God hateth sinners as they hate him ; for we are children of wrath from the womb, Eph. ii. 3 ; and that wrath abideth on us till we enter into God's peace, John iii. 36 ; and the more wicked we are, the more we incur God's wrath : Ps. vii. 11, 'He is angry with the wicked

every day ; ' 'They are under his curse,' Gal. iii. 10. Whatever be the secret purposes of his grace, yet so they are by the sentence of his law, and according to that we must judge of our condition.

Secondly, The nature of this reconciliation.

1. As the enmity is mutual, so is the reconciliation ; God is reconciled to us, and we to God. On God's part, his wrath is appeased ; and our wicked disposition is taken away by regeneration, for there are the causes of the difference between him and us,—his justice and our sin. His justice is satisfied in Christ, so that he is willing to offer us a new covenant : Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' He is satisfied in Christ, that he is willing to forgive the offences done to him ; for the text saith, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' And our wicked disposition is done away, and our hearts are converted and turned to the Lord : Acts ix. 6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?' and 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'But yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may be turned from you.' And we are drawn to enter into covenant with the Lord, even that new covenant which is called the covenant of his peace, Isa. liv. 10 ; and so of enemies we are made friends, as Abraham, because of his covenant relation, is called 'The friend of God,' James ii. 23. In the new covenant God offereth pardon, and requireth repentance. When we accept the offer, the pardon procured for us by Christ, and submit to the conditions, lay down the weapons of our defiance, and give the hand to the Lord, to walk with him in all new obedience, then are we reconciled.

2. This reconciliation is as firm and strong as our estate in innocency, as if there had been no foregoing breach ; and in some considerations better, especially when we look to the full effect of it ; as good as if the first covenant had never been broken ; for God doth not only put away his anger, but loveth us as if we never had been in hatred ; he doth not only pardon sinners, but delight in them when they repent. Men may forgive a fault, but they do not forget it ; the person liveth in umbrage and suspicion with them still. Absalom was pardoned—'But not to see the king's face,' 2 Sam. xiv. 28. Shimei had a lease of his life, but lived always as a hated and a suspected man, 1 Kings ii. 8. But now it is otherwise here ; we find not only mercy with God, but are as firmly instated into his love as ever—'Our sins are cast into the depths of the sea,' Hosea vii. 19 ; and Hosea xiv. 4, 'I will love them freely ;' and Rom. ix. 25, 'And her beloved, which was not beloved.' He not only passeth by the injury, but calls her beloved. Breaches between man and man are like deep wounds ; though healed the scars remain, something sticketh, or like a vessel soldered, weak in the crack ; but here, beloved, delighted in—'The Lord delighteth in thee,' Isa. lxii. 4, and 'he will rest in his love.' In some sort it is more sure ; it is not committed to us and the freedom of our wills. A bone well set is strongest where broken. Adam was happy, but not established.

3. This active reconciliation draweth many blessings along with it.

[1.] Peace with God : Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have
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peace with God.' To have God an enemy is to have a sharp sword always hanging over our heads by a slender thread. How can we look him in the face, lift up our heads to heaven, think of him without trembling? There is a God, but he is our enemy; how can we eat, drink, or sleep, while God is our enemy? Did we know what it is to have God our enemy, we should soon know that he cannot want instruments of revenge; death may waylay us in every place. If we eat, our meat may poison or choke us; if we go abroad, God may cast us into hell before we come home again; if we sleep, his wrath may take us napping—'For our damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter ii. 3. Surely it is such a dreadful thing to be at enmity with God, that we should not continue in that estate for a moment; but when once you are at peace with God, you stop all evil at the fountain-head.

[2.] Access to God with boldness and free trade into heaven: Rom. v. 2, 'By whom we have access by faith'; and Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we have both access by one Spirit unto the Father.' When a peace is made between two warring nations, trading is revived; when you have occasion to make use of God, you may go to him as your reconciled Father; there is no flaming sword to keep you out of paradise.

[3.] Acceptance both of your persons and performances. Your persons are accepted: Eph. i. 6, 'He hath accepted us in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace.' You are looked upon as members of Christ, favourites of heaven; your duties and actions are accepted: Heb. xi. 4, 'By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.' The sinful failings of our best actions are hid and covered; they are not examined by a severe judge, but accepted by a loving Father.

[4.] All the graces of the Spirit are fruits of our reconciliation with God: Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement;' jewels of the covenant, wherewith the spouse of Christ is decked. Christ prayed, that we might be loved as he was loved, John xvii., not for degree, but kind, John iii. 34. These are given as tokens and evidences of his love. The privilege is so great, that we cannot believe it without some real demonstration of God's heart towards us. When Jacob heard that Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, he would not believe it; but when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to carry him, Gen. xlvi. 27, 28, 'Then his spirit revived within him;' so here, 1 Thes. i. 5, 'For our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

[5.] All outward blessings are sanctified, especially the enjoyment of them, which we have by another right and tenure. Surely one that is reconciled to God cannot be miserable, 'for all things are his,' 1 Cor. iii. 23. Whatsoever falleth to his share, comfort and cross cometh with a blessing—'And all worketh for good,' Rom. viii. 28. God's enmity is declared by raining snares, Ps. xi. 6. There is a secret war against the soul; but his love, that always worketh for good. Out of what corner soever the wind bloweth, it always bloweth for good to his people.

[6.] It is a pledge of heaven: Rom. v. 10, 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled,

we shall be saved by his life.' The glorifying of a saint is a more easy thing than the reconciling of a sinner; suppose the one, and you may suppose the other. If God would pardon us and take us with all our faults, he will much more glorify us when we are reconciled and sanctified.

[7.] Our right to this privilege beginneth as soon as we do believe in Christ, for upon these terms God hath set forth Christ: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' When our hearts are drawn to receive Christ upon these terms, we are legally capable of his favour. Now faith is nothing else but a broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of Christ, with a resolution to give up ourselves to God by him. The true notion of Christ's death is the sacrifice of atonement. Now in the sacrifices of atonement, they were to come with brokenness of heart, confessing sin over the head of the beast, Ps. li. 17, owning the Messiah to come, and a stipulation of obedience: Ps. l. 5, 'Gather my saints together, that make a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Well then, when in a broken-hearted manner we make our claim by Christ, thankfully acknowledging our Redeemer's grace, and sue out our release and discharge in his name, and devote ourselves to God, then our right is begun. The evidence of this right is when faith is made fruitful in holiness. God is a holy God, and Christ came not to make God less holy. He may be reconciled to our persons, but never to our sins. Sin ever was, and ever will be, the make-bate between God and us: Isa.lix. 2, 'Your sins have separated between you and me.' There must be a zealous renouncing of all things that have bred estrangement between us and God. Everything in this reconciliation implieth holiness; the party with whom we do reconcile, God; and he must not lightly be offended, but pleased: Col. i. 10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing'—tender of offending God. The nature of the reconciliation is mutual; we with God, as well as God with us. A real change goeth along with the relative, or else we are taken for enemies still, Ps. lxviii. 21. The covenant is a league offensive and defensive. *Pax nostra bellum contra Satanam.* We cannot be at peace with God, till fallen out with sin, we resolve to war against the devil, the world, and the flesh; you must not make him a patron and panderer to your lusts: Exod. xxiii. 20–22, 'Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.' We must carry ourselves with great reverence to the angel of the covenant, 1 Cor. x. 9. The sanctifying grace of the Spirit; for the application of the merit of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, are inseparable. God will not pardon our sins while we remain in them; we must be sanctified and justified, and then we shall have peace and comfort. 'What! peace as long as the whoredom of thy mother Jezebel remaineth?' Men that sin freely know not what peace with God meaneth. This holy friendship, which resulteth from the covenant, implieth an indignation against sin: Hosea xiv. 8, 'What

have I any more to do with idols ?' and Isa. xxx. 22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstrual cloth ; thou shalt say unto it, Get ye hence.'

Thirdly, How far Christ is concerned in it, and why.

1. God was resolved to lose no honour by the fall of man, but to keep up a sense of his justice, goodness, and truth.

[1.] His justice. It was not fit that any of his attributes should fall to the ground, especially his justice, the sense of which is so necessary for the government of the world : Rom. iii. 5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance ? God forbid. How then shall God judge the world ?' If God be not known for a just God, we cannot know him for the governor of the world. Well then, there was a condescendency in it, that mercy should be dispensed, so that justice should be no loser. Now, God saw that men could not keep up the honour of his justice ; our prayers, tears, repentance, will not do the deed without something else. If the devils were supposed to be sorrowful for their sins, they would not be reconciled, because they had no surety to die for them and repair the honour of God's justice. In pity, God would not destroy all mankind, therefore findeth out a surety ; if they had suffered, they would only be satisfying, rather than to satisfy and have satisfied. 'But now Christ hath declared his righteousness,' Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'for the remission of sins.'

[2.] His holiness, which is the pattern of the creature's perfection. Such was God's hatred of sin that he would not let it go without a mark or brand ; he would be known to be an holy God, and that it is not an easy thing to regain his favour if we yield to sin. People are apt to look upon it as a matter of nothing. It is an easy matter to sin ; every fool can do that ; but when the breach is made, it is not easy to reconcile again ; none but the Son of God can do that. God stood upon a valuable compensation : 1 Peter. i. 18, 'We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold ; but by the precious blood of the Son of God.' The Son of God, by the highest act of obedience and self-denial, must bring it about for a caution to us, that we might not lightly break the law, or have favourable thoughts of sin any more.

[3.] His truth. God made a covenant with Adam—'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Adam's sin was mainly the sin of unbelief, and presumption of impunity is very natural to us all ; therefore the law must have death to keep up its authority, lest the threatening should seem a vain scarecrow, either from the sinner himself, or from his surety.

2. Christ was a fit mediator.

[1.] Because of his mutual interest in God and us, Job ix. 33. He is beloved of the Father, and hath a brotherly compassion to us. He did partake of the nature of both parties ; he was man to undertake it in our name, God to perform it in his own strength.

[2.] He is able to satisfy. All the angels in heaven could not lay down a valuable consideration, but 'he is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 26. Christ undertaketh to pacify God's wrath, and to take away our enmity also, and so to bring us to God.

Use 1. Let us admire the mercy and grace of God—'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' To this end consider—

1. This is an ancient mercy of an old standing : Eph. i. 4, 'He hath

chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world ;' and 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for you.' And who are we, that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago ? Nothing went before creation, but mere and naked eternity ; then was this business transacted between the Father and the Son, the result of God's eternal thoughts.

2. God is first in the design, he who is the wronged party, the highest judge, of whose vengeance we stand in dread, of whom we beg pardon ; we were first in the breach, but God in the design of love. The motion of sending a saviour and redeemer into the world was first bred in God's heart : 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.'

3. This love is the more amplified by the worthlessness of the persons for whom all this is done ; the world that lay in wickedness and rebellion against God, the sinful race of apostatised Adam. At our best, how little service and honour can we bring to him. But he considered us as lying in the corrupt mass of polluted mankind ; yet this world would God reconcile to himself, and not angels. God would not so much as enter into a parley with them ; as if a king should take rustics and scullions into his favour, and pass by nobles and princes. There lay no bond at all to show mercy to us, more than to them ; we had cast him off and rebelled against him as well as they.

4. And this done by Jesus Christ, that so costly a remedy should be provided for us : Rom viii. 32, 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' God may be said to spare, either in a way of impartial justice, or in a way of bountiful and condescending love ; the first hath its use, this latter is the case there. We are sparing of what is precious, of what we value ; but though Christ was his dear Son, yet he spared not him : it is the folly of man to part with things of worth and value for trifles.

5. The benefit itself, that he would reconcile us to himself. (1.) In laying aside his own just wrath, which is our great terror : Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Fury is not in me,' he being pacified in Christ. (2.) That he would take away the enmity that is in the hearts of men by his converting and healing grace, which is our great burden : Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.' (3.) That he will enter into league and covenant with us, God with us and we with God : Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them upon their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' (4.) That from hence there floweth an entire friendship : John xv. 15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends ; for all that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' (5.) This friendship produceth most gracious fruits and effects, especially free commerce with him here, till we are admitted into his immediate presence : Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

Use 2. Let us consider seriously the mystery of Christ's death, which is the sacrifice of our atonement ; it is full of riddles, it is a spectacle which represents to you the highest mercy in God's sparing sinners, and

calling out his own Son to die in our stead ; and the highest justice in punishing sin, though transacted upon Christ. ‘If this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?’ Here you have Christ made sin, and yet at the same time the fountain of holiness, 2 Cor. v. 21, and John i. 16, ‘Out of his fulness we receive grace for grace ;’ so again, the fountain of blessedness made a curse for all the world, Gal. iii. 13. In man’s account, never more weakness and foolishness shown, yet never more wisdom and power : 1 Cor. i. 25, ‘The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.’ He had said before that Christ was the ‘wisdom of God, and the power of God.’ The devil never seemed to triumph more, yet never more foiled, Luke xxii. 53 (compare with Col. ii. 15;) Christ is the true Samson, destroyed more at his death than in all his life. The cross was not a gibbet of shame and infamy, but a chariot of triumph. This was the holiest work and the greatest act of obedience that ever was, or can, or will be, performed, and yet the wickedest work that ever the sun beheld ; on Christ’s part, an high act of obedience and self-denial, Phil. ii. 7 ; on man’s part, the greatest act of villany and wickedness : Acts ii. 23, ‘Who by wicked hands have crucified and slain,’ the highest act of meekness and violence ; the truest glass wherein we see the greatness and smallness of sin. The heinousness of sin is seen in his agonies and bloody sufferings ; the nothingness of it in the merit of them. Christ’s death is the reason of the great judgment fallen upon the Jews, 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16, and yet the ground upon which we expect mercy, both for ourselves and them, Eph. ii. 16. In short, here is life rising out of death, glory out of ignominy, blessedness out of the curse ; from the abasement of the Son of God, joy, liberty, and confidence to us.

SERMON XXXV.

Not imputing their trespasses to them.—2 Cor. v. 19.

Doct. One great branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God through Christ is the pardon or non-imputation of sin.

Here I shall show—(1.) The nature and worth of the privilege ; (2.) The manner, how it is brought about ; (3.) That it is a branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God.

First. The nature and worth of the privilege, *not imputing*. The phrase is elsewhere used : Rom. iv. 8, ‘Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin ;’ so 2 Tim. iv. 16, *μὴ λογισθεῖν*, ‘All men forsook me ; I pray God it be not laid to their charge,’ or reckoned to their account. It is a metaphor taken from those who cast up their accounts ; and so—

1. It supposeth that sin is a debt, Mat. vi. 12,—*Ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν*, ‘and forgive us our debts.’

2. That God will one day call sinners to an account, and charge such and such debts upon them : Mat. xxv. 19, ‘After a long time the lord

of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.' For a while men live jollily and in great security, care for nothing ; but a day of reckoning will come.

3. In this day of accounts, God will not impute the trespasses of those who are reconciled to him by Christ, and have taken sanctuary at the grace of the new covenant, to their condemnation, nor use them as they deserve. Every one deserves wrath and eternal death, and sin obligeth us thereunto, but God will not lay it to our charge ; and so it is said : Ps. xxxii. 2, 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' Now this is an act of great grace on God's part, and of great privilege and blessedness to the creature.

[1.] An act of great grace and favour on God's part. (1.) Partly because every one is become ' guilty before God,' and obnoxious to the process of his righteous judgment : Rom. iii. 19—*ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ*, 'and all the world may become guilty before God.' There is sin enough to impute ; and the reason of this non-imputation is not our innocence, but God's mercy. Among men imputations are often unjust and slanderous, as David complaineth that they imputed and 'laid things to his charge that he was not guilty of,' or never did ; but we are all guilty. (2.) Partly that he would not prosecute his right against us as a revenging and just judge, calling us to a strict account, and punishing us according to our demerits, which would have been our utter undoing : Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand ?' Ps. cxlii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified.' There is not a man found which hath not faults and failings enough, and if God should proceed with him in his just severity, he would be utterly incapable of any favour. (3.) Partly, because he found out the way how to recompense the wrong done by sin unto his majesty, and sent his Son to make this recompence for us, 'who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 'Our iniquities were laid on him,' Isa. liii. 4; 'and his righteousness imputed to us,' Rom. iv. 11. (4.) And partly, that he did this out of his mere love, which set a-work all the causes which concurred in the business of our redemption : John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The external moving cause was only our misery ; the internal moving cause was his own grace and mercy. And this love was not excited by any love on our parts : Rom. iii. 24. 'Justified freely by his grace ;' that is, by his grace working of its own accord. (5.) And partly, that this negative or non-imputation is heightened by the positive imputation—there is a non-imputing of sin and an acceptance of us as righteous in Christ ; his merits are reckoned and adjudged to us ; that is, we have the effect of his sufferings—as if we had suffered in person : Christ is become to us 'the end of the law for righteousness,' Rom. x. 4.

[2.] It is matter of great privilege and blessedness to the creature, if so be the Lord will not impute our sins to us, and account them to our score. This will appear,—

(1.) If we consider the evil we are freed from ; guilt is an obligation to punishment, and pardon is the dissolving and loosening this obliga-

tion. Now the punishment of sin is exceeding great; what maketh hell and damnation, but not-forgiveness? Hell is not a mere scarecrow, nor heaven a May-game; it is eternity maketh every thing truly great, an everlasting exile and separation from the comfortable presence of the Lord, which is the *paena damni*: Mat. xxv. 41, ‘Go, ye cursed;’ and Luke xiii. 27, ‘Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;’ they are shut out, and thrust out from the presence of the Lord. When God turned Adam out of paradise, his case was very sad, but nothing comparable to this; God took care of him in his exile, and made coats of skins for him. God gave him a day of patience afterwards, promised the seed of the woman, intimated hopes of a better paradise; but instead of all comforts, how sad is it to be sent into an endless state of misery! which is the *paena sensus*: Mark ix. 44, ‘The worm that never dieth, and the fire that shall never be quenched’—the worm of conscience, when we think of our folly, imprudence, disobedience to God. A man may run away from his conscience now, by sleeping, running, riding, walking, working, drinking, distract his mind by a clatter of business, but then not a thought free. The soul will be always thinking of slighted means, abused comforts, wasted time, and of the course wherein we have involved ourselves. Then our repentance will be fruitless. Our sorrows now are curing, then tormenting, when under the wrath of God; you coldly now entertain the offer of a pardon; then, oh for a little mitigation, a drop to cool your tongue!

(2) Because of the good depending upon it in this life and the next.

(1st.) In this life—Partly, because we are not fitted to serve God till sin be pardoned: Heb. ix. 14, ‘How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?’ God pardoneth, that he may further sanctify us and fit us for his own use. The end of forgiveness is, that God may have his own again which was lost, and we might be engaged to love him and live to him. Forgiveness tends to holiness, as the means to the end; and so there is way made for our thankfulness and love to our Redeemer, which is the predominant ruling affection in the kingdom of grace, and the main motive of obedience. Partly, because we cannot please God till sin be pardoned; for God will not accept our actual service, till our guilt be removed—till pardoning grace cover our defects. Whence should we hope for acceptance? From the worth of our persons? that is none at all. From the integrity of the work? Alas, after grace received, we are maimed in our principles and operations; much more before: Heb. xi. 6, ‘Without faith no man can please God.’ Rom. viii. 8, ‘They that are in the flesh cannot please God.’ Till we are adopted, reconciled, absolved, neither our persons nor our actions can find acceptance with him. And partly, because we have no sound comfort and rejoicing in ourselves till we obtain the pardon of our sins, and be in such an estate that God will not impute our trespasses to us; for while sin remaineth unpardoned, and the sentence of the law not reversed, the soul is still in doubt or fear; if not, it proceedeth from our security and forgetfulness, which will do us no good; for we do but put off the evil, rather than put it away, and deal as a

malefactor that keepeth himself drunk till he cometh to execution. In scripture a pardon is made the solid ground of comfort: Isa. xl. 1, 2, ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.’ When God’s wrath is pacified and appeased, then there is ground of comfort indeed; when God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven and forgotten all our transgressions, and accepted a ransom for us; so Mat. ix. 2, ‘Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.’ Aye, then misery is stopped at the fountain-head, our great trouble is over; but till then all our comforts are soured by our fears: when the sun by its bright beams appeareth, it dispelleth mists and clouds.

(2dly.) In the next life we are not capable of enjoying God, and being made happy for evermore in his love, till we be in such an estate that God will not impute our trespasses to us; for till we escape wrath we cannot enjoy happiness, nor till his anger be pacified can we have any interest in his love: Rom. v. 18, ‘The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.’ Now our right beginneth when sin is taken out of the way; and hereafter our impunity in heaven is a means to our perfect enjoying, pleasing, and glorifying of God, Acts xxvi. 18, when we are made capable of the blessed inheritance.

Secondly. The manner how this privilege is brought about and applied to us by these steps.

1. The first stone in this building was laid in God’s eternal decree and purpose to reconcile sinners to himself by Christ, not imputing their trespasses to them. I cannot pass over this consideration, because it is of principal importance in this place: ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.’ Then he was thinking of a sufficient sacrifice, ransom, and satisfaction for all the world of sinners, and that he would not deal with them according to the desert of their sin, but in mercy, and provided a sufficient remedy for the pardon of sin for all those who would or should accept of it in time. The covenant of grace is founded upon the covenant of redemption, Isa. liii. 10, 11; and the plot and design for our reconciliation, pardon, and adoption, was then laid according to the terms agreed upon between the Father and the Son—what the Redeemer should do for the satisfying of his wrath, what sinners should do that they may have pardon in the method which God hath appointed; and so God should be actually reconciled to us, and sinners actually pardoned in time when we submit to the terms.

2. The second step towards this blessed effect was, when Christ was actually exhibited in the flesh, and paid our ransom for us; for then he came to take away sin: 1 John iii. 5, ‘The Son of God was manifested to take away sin, and in him was no sin;’ so John i. 29, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;’ and it is said, Heb. i. 3, ‘When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of majesty;’ and Heb. x. 14, ‘By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.’ There needed no more to be done by way of merit, and satisfaction, and sacrifice. We must carefully distinguish between impetration and application, Christ’s acquiring and our applying; as also between God’s purposing

and our enjoying pardon, or actual interest in it. God purposed it from all eternity, but we are not actually reconciled and pardoned from all eternity, no more than we were actually created, sanctified, and glorified from all eternity. So Christ purchased it, when he died; and therefore the apostle saith, ‘we were reconciled by the death of his Son,’ Rom. v. 10; then all was done on Christ’s part which was necessary to our reconciliation and pardon; by virtue of the satisfaction made by Christ, he was pleased to profess to us free and easy conditions of mercy in the gospel, by which it might be actually applied to us.

3. The next step was, when Christ rose from the dead; for then we had a visible evidence of the sufficiency of the ransom, sacrifice, and satisfaction which he made for us; therefore it is said, Rom. v. 25, ‘That he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification.’ As he died for our release and pardon, and to make expiation for our sins, so he rose again to convince the unbelieving world by that supreme act of his power, that all was finished which was necessary to our pardon and reconciliation with God; for Christ’s resurrection was the acquittance of our surety, Rom. viii. 34, ‘Yea rather that is risen again.’ God hath received a sufficient ransom for sins, and all that believe in him shall find the benefit and comfort of it.

4. We are actually justified, pardoned, and reconciled, when we repent and believe. Whatever thoughts and purposes of grace God in Christ may have towards us from all eternity, yet we are under the fruits of sin, till we become penitent believers; for we must distinguish between God’s looking upon the elect in the purposes of his grace, and in the sentence of his law; in the purposes of his grace, so he loved the elect with the love of good-will; in the sentence of his law, so we were under wrath, Eph. ii. 3, and John iii. 18, ‘Condemned already,’ and wrath remaineth on us, till believing and repenting. That these are conditions which only make us capable of pardon is evident.

[1.] Repentance: Acts v. 31, ‘Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.’ Christ purchased pardon and absolution into his own hands, as king and judge, or head of the renewed state, to be dispensed according to the laws of his mediatorial kingdom; and so he giveth both these together. So he grants pardon by his new law, by which he requireth and giveth repentance and remission of sin; so he sent forth his messengers into the world: Luke xxiv. 47, ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.’ Well then, none but the penitent are capable.

[2.] Faith: Acts x. 43, ‘To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins;’ and Acts xiii. 38, 39, ‘Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;’ and, ‘by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.’ It belongeth to the power and office of our Lord Jesus to forgive sin; and it must be forgiven according to the terms of his new covenant or law; and that is, when men obediently receive his doctrine, and by their prayers offered in his name, do in a broken-hearted manner sue

out their pardon, and remission of their sins, they are justified and accepted with God, and freed from his wrath and punishment which attend sin in another world. Well then, none are actually and personally pardoned, but penitent believers. This benefit is bestowed upon sinners, but sinners repenting and believing; a person abiding in his sins and persisting in his rebellion, cannot be made partaker of this privilege; repentance qualifieth the subject, faith immediately receiveth it, as having a special aptitude that way. That I may not nakedly assert this truth, but explain it for your edification, I shall suggest two things.

(1.) As to the nature of these graces, that the reference of repentance is towards God, and faith doth especially respect the mediator; so I find them distinguished: Acts xx. 21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' All christianity is a coming to God by him, Heb. vii. 25. Repentance towards God noteth a willingness to return to the duty, love, and service, which we owe to our Creator, from whence we have fallen by our folly and sin. This must be, for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, or, which is all one, to pardon our sins while we remain in them; but to bring us back again to the service, love, and enjoyment of God. Faith respects the Redeemer; for by dependence upon his merit, and the sufficiency of his sacrifice, and the power of his Spirit, we come to God, and by a thankful sense of his love, we are encouraged and enabled to do our duty. Well then, when in a broken-hearted manner we confess our sins, and own our Redeemer, and devote ourselves to God, and resolve to walk in Christ's prescribed way, then are sins pardoned, and we accepted with God.

(2.) This faith and repentance is wrought in us by the word, and mainly acted in prayer. First, It is wrought in us by the word, wherein God is pleased to propound free and easy conditions of pardon and mercy, praying us to be reconciled, and to cast away the weapons of our rebellion, and submit to the law of grace; for here in verses 18-20, he doth not only reveal the mystery, but beseecheth us to enter into covenant with him, and to yield up ourselves to his service. Secondly, Prayer, by which in the name of Christ we sue out this benefit. This is the means appointed both for regenerate and unregenerate; the unregenerate: Acts viii. 22, 'Repent therefore of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart be forgiven thee;' the regenerate: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' Believing, broken-hearted prayer doth notably prevail; the publican had no other suit but, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13. The Lord describeth the poor sinners that came to him for pardon, Jer. xxxi. 9, 'They shall come with weeping and supplications.'

5. We are sensibly pardoned, as well as actually, when the Lord giveth peace and joy in believing, 'and sheddeth abroad his love in our hearts by the Spirit.' We must distinguish between the grant and the sense; sometimes a pardon may be granted, when we have not the sense and comfort of it. We may hold a precious jewel with a trembling hand, as the waves roll after a storm when the wind is ceased. God may keep his people humble, as a prince may grant a

pardon to a condemned malefactor, but he will not have him know so much till he come even to the place of execution. David's heart was to Absalom, yet he would not let him see his face. There are two courts, the court of heaven and the court of conscience. The pardon may be passed in the one, and not in the other; and a man may have peace with God, when he hath not peace of conscience. To assure our hearts before him, and know our sincerity, 1 John iii. 9, is a thing distinct from being sincere; and a man may be safe, though not comfortable. Every one that believeth cannot make the bold challenge of faith, and say, 'Who shall condemn?' Rom. viii. 33.

6. The last step is when we have a complete and full absolution of sin—that is, at the day of judgment: Acts iii. 19, 'Your sins shall be blotted out when days of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord;' when the judge, *pro tribunali*, shall sententiously, and in the audience of all the world, pronounce our pardon. To make title to pardon by law is comfortable, but then we shall have it from our Judge's own mouth. Here we are continually subject to new guilt, and so to new sins, whereby arise new fears; so till our final absolution we are not fully perfect, not till the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. When the evils of sin do fully cease, then is our adoption full, Rom. viii. 23; then will our regeneration be full, Mat. xix. 28; then all the effects of sin will cease. Death upon the body will be no interruption of pardon; we shall be fully acquitted, and never sin more.

Thirdly. That it is a branch and fruit of our reconciliation with God; the other is the gift of the Spirit, or all things that belong to the new nature; for God giveth sanctifying grace as the God of peace. But this also is a notable branch and fruit of reconciliation.

1. Because when God releaseth us from the punishment of sin, it is a sign his anger and wrath is appeased and now over: Isa. xxiv. 7, 'Fury is not in me.' God hath been angry for a little moment, but when he pardoneth sin then he is pacified, for sin is the make-bate between us and God.

2. That which is the ground of reconciliation is the ground of pardon of sin: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' viz. the price paid by the mediator to his father's justice; and therefore a principal part of our reconciliation and redemption is remission of sins in justification.

3. That which is the fruit of reconciliation is obtained and promoted by pardon of sin, and that is fellowship with God and delightful communion with him in a course of obedience and subjection to him: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Our general pardon at first is to put us into a state of new obedience, our particular pardon engageth us to continue in a course of acceptable obedience, that we may maintain a holy commerce with God: 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

Use 1. Is to inform us, that all those that seek after reconciliation with God, or would take themselves to be reconciled to him, should be

dealing with God about the pardon of sins, and suing out this privilege, which is of such use in their commerce with God.

But here ariseth a doubt; what need have those that are reconciled to God to beg pardon?

Ans. Very great, Mat. vi. 12. Our Lord hath taught us so; we pray for daily pardon and daily grace against temptations, as well as for daily bread. I prove it,—

1. From the condition of God's people here in the world. We are not so fully sanctified here in the world, but there is some sin found in us; original sin remaineth with us to the last, and we have our actual slips. Paul complaineth of the body of death, Rom. vii. 23; and the apostle telleth us: 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' and ver. 10, 'If we say, that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us;' and Eccl. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;' either omitting good or committing evil. They do not love God with that purity and fervency, nor serve him with that liberty, delight, and reverence, that he hath required. It is the happiness of the church triumphant, that they have no sin; of the church militant, that their sin is forgiven. Sometimes we sin out of ignorance; sometimes out of imprudence and inconsideration; sometimes we are overtaken, and sometimes overborne; now these things must be heartily bewailed to God. While a ship is leaking water we must use the pump; and the room that is continually gathering soil must be daily swept; the stomach that is still breeding ill humours must have new physic. We still make work for pardoning mercy, and therefore for repentance and faith.

2. From the several things which we ask in asking a pardon.

[1.] For the grant, that God would accept of the satisfaction of Christ for our sins, and of us for his sake. Christ was to ask and sue out the fruits of his mediation, Ps. ii. 8. And we are humbly to sue out our right; for notwithstanding the condescensions of his grace, God dealeth with us as a sovereign, and doth require submission on our part: Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.' The debt is humbly to be acknowledged by the creature, though God hath found out a means to pardon it.

[2.] We beg the continuance of a pardon; as in daily bread, though we have it by us, we beg the continuance and use of it; so in sanctification, we beg the continuance of sanctification, as well as the increase, because of the relics of corruption. God may for our exercise make us feel the smart of old sins, as an old bruise, though it be healed, yet ever and anon we feel it upon change of weather; accusations of conscience may return for sins already pardoned: Job. xiii. 26, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the sins of my youth.' Sins of youth may trouble a man that is reconciled to God, and hath obtained pardon of them. God's children may have their guilt raked out of its grave, and the appearance of it may be as frightful, as a ghost or one risen from the dead; the wounds of an healed conscience may bleed afresh. Therefore we need beg as David: Ps. xxv. 6, 7, 'Remember thy mercies which have been of old; re-

member not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' When we are unthankful, unwatchful, or negligent, God may permit it for our humiliation.

[3.] The sense and manifestation. Few believers have assurance of their own sincerity; God may blot sins out of his book, when he doth not blot them out of our consciences; God blotteth them out of the book of his remembrance, as soon as we repent and believe; but he blotteth them out of our consciences, when the worm of conscience is killed by the application of the blood of Christ through the Spirit: Heb. x. 22, 'Sprinkled from an evil conscience.' David beggeth the sense, when Nathan had told him of the grant: Ps. li. 12, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,' forgive it in our sense and feeling.

[4.] The increase of our sense; for it is not given out in such a degree, as to shut out all fear and doubt: 1 John iv. 18, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love.'

[5.] The effects of pardon, or freedom from those evils, which are the fruits of sin. We would have God to pardon us, as we pardon others, fully and entirely; forgive, and forget; that he would not execute upon us the temporal punishment, farther than is necessary for our good; compare 2 Kings xxiii. 26, with Ezek. xxxiii. 12-14. Either he will not chastise us, or, if he doth, he will sanctify our afflictions. When God remits the eternal punishment, yet he inflicteth temporal evil, not to complete our justification, but to further our sanctification. If we knew only the sweetness of sin and not the bitterness, we would not be so shy of it: Jer. ii. 19, 'Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts;' 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'Chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned.'

[6.] A renewed pardon for every renewed sin which we commit: 1 John ii. 1, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' and 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As soon as we repent and believe there is a general pardon, the state of the person is changed, he is made a child of God: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his name;' John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not to wash, save his feet;' because by going up and down in the world we contract new defilement. He is translated from a state of wrath to a state of grace; all sins past are remitted. God doth not pardon some, and leave others, though God's pardon be not antedated: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.' And such an one hath free leave to sue out pardon for future sins, and so have a greater holdfast upon God; they have a present certain effectual remedy at hand for their pardon, that is, the merit of Christ's blood, the covenant of grace in which they have an interest, Christ's intercession and the Spirit to excite them to faith and repentance. Well then, let us fly to Christ for daily pardon; as under the

law there were daily sacrifices to be offered up, Num. xxviii. 3. God came to Adam in the cool of the day, Gen. iii. 8. Reconciliation with man is to be sought speedily: Eph. iv. 26, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath.' The unclean person was to wash his clothes before the evening. Our hearts should be humbled within us to think that God is displeased.

[7.] We pray for our pardon and acceptance with Christ at the last day of general judgment: Luke xxi. 36, 'Watch and pray, that ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' Some effect of sin remaineth till then, as death on the body; so that whilst any penal evil introduced by sin remaineth, we pray that God will not repent of his mercy.

Use 2. It sheweth how much we should prize pardon, as a special fruit of the love of God and Christ: Rev. i. 5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood;' 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' If we be serious we will do so. Those that have felt anything of the burden of sin will entertain the offer of pardon with great thankfulness; it is a privilege welcome to distressed consciences. What man in chains would not be glad of liberty? what debtor would not be discharged? how glad is an honest man to be out of debt? what guilty malefactor would not be acquitted? Oh, let it not seem a light thing in your eye! we have lost our spiritual relish if it do. Oh, prize a pardon, apprehend it as a great benefit, sweeter than the honey and honeycomb.

Use 3. It should engage us to love God: Luke vii. 47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

SERMON XXXVI.

Not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 Cor. v. 19.

Doct. One great branch and fruit of our reconciliation with God is the pardon of sins.

Reasons—

First. Because reconciliation implieth in its own nature a release of the punishment of sin, or, on God's part, a laying aside of his wrath and anger; as on ours a laying aside of our enmity and disobedience: Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Fury is not in me.' Anger in God is nothing else but his justice appointing the punishment of sin; and he is said to be reconciled or pacified, when he hath no will to punish, or doth not purpose to punish, and therefore fitly is this part of the reconciliation expressed by not imputing our trespasses; especially because our

reconciliation with God is not the reconciliation of private persons or of equals, but such as is between superiors and inferiors, a prince and his rebellious subjects, parents and their disobedient children, the governor and judge of the world and sinning mankind, and therefore not to be ended by way of agreement and composition, but by way of satisfaction, humiliation, and pardon; satisfaction on Christ's part, humiliation on our part, pardon on God's. When persons fall out that are in a private capacity, the difference may be ended by composition; they may quit the sense of the wrong done to them, but the case is different here; God is not reconciled to us merely as the party offended, but as the governor of the world. A private man, as the party offended, may easily remit a wrong done to him without requiring satisfaction or submission, according to his own pleasure, as Joseph was reconciled to his brethren; but here God is not considered as the party offended merely, but as the supreme judge, who is to proceed according to law. When the magistrate forgiveth, there must be a stated pardon; and so God is to find out a way how the law is to be satisfied, and the offender saved, by releasing the punishment in such a way as the law may not fall to the ground, and that is not without the satisfaction of Christ, and the submission of the sinner, and the solemn grant of a pardon. A private man may do in his own case as pleaseth him, but there is a difference in a public person. The right of passing by a wrong, and the right of releasing a punishment, are different things, because punishment is a common interest, and is referred to the common good, to preserve order and for an example to others.

Secondly. This branch is mentioned, because this was the most inviting motive to bring the creature to submission, and to comply with God's other ends. To understand this reason, consider—

1. Among the benefits which we have by Christ, some concern our felicity, others our duty; some concern our privileges, others our service, qualities, rights. The internal qualities and graces are conveyed and wrought in us by the sanctifying Spirit; the rights and privileges are conveyed to us by deed of gift, by the covenant of grace, or new testament charter or gospel grant. As the one frees us from a moral evil, which is sin; the other from a natural evil, which is misery. Of the one sort is holiness, and all those divine qualities which constitute the new nature, inherent graces; of the other sort are pardon of sins, adoption, right to glory, adherent rights and privileges. Now God offereth the one to invite us to the other by the gospel as a deed of gift, or special act of grace; God offereth the one upon condition we will seek after the other, which deed of gift cannot take effect till we fulfil the condition; we cannot have remission of sins till we have repentance. It is true he giveth the qualification as well as the privilege, repentance as well as remission of sins, Acts v. 31; but he giveth it this way; he giveth repentance offering remission; that is the natural way of God's working, the appointed means to draw man's heart to the performance of the condition. As the Spirit doth work powerfully within, so he useth the word without. Well then, if we would have the benefits by Christ, we must have all or none—repentance as well as remission, faith as well as adoption, and justification and holiness as well as a right to glory; for Christ in all the dispensations of his grace

looketh at God's glory, as well as our interest ; therefore if we come rightly to the covenant, and expect grace by our Redeemer, we must 'come with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,' Heb. x. 22.

2. The one is the first inviting and powerful motive to the other. Partly, our desires of happiness, which even corrupt nature is not against, are made use of, and apt to gain upon us to a desire of happiness. God would leave some inclination and desires to happiness in the heart of man, that might direct us in some sort to seek after himself: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.' Nature catcheth at felicity ; we would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory ; we are willing as to our own benefit to be pardoned and freed from the curse of the law, and the flames of hell ; we are naturally willing of justification, but naturally unwilling to deny the flesh, and to renounce the credit, profit, or pleasure of sin, and to grow dead to the world and worldly things ; but these other suit with our desires of happiness ; therefore God would, in reconciling the creature, go to work this way ; promise that which we desire, on condition that we will submit to those things which we are against. As we sweeten pills to children, that they may swallow them down the better ; they love the sugar, though they loathe the aloes ; so here, God would invite us to our duty by our interest, and therefore in reconciling the world to himself, he would first be discovered as not imputing their trespasses to them. Partly, because of our fears, as well as our desires of happiness, God taketh this way. The grand scruple which haunteth the creature is, how God shall be appeased, and quit his controversy against us by reason of sin : Micah v. 6, 'Wherewith will he be appeased, and what shall I give for the sin of my soul ?' There is a fear of death and punishment, which ariseth from these natural sentiments which we have of God : Rom. i. 32, 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' The dread of a God angry for sin is natural to us, and the ground of all our trouble. Man is afraid of death, and some misery after death which is likely to come upon him, Heb. ii. 14 ; and till the forgiveness of sin be procured for us, this bondage sticketh close to us, and we know not how to get off it. God is an holy God, and cannot endure iniquity, and by his law will not suffer the guilty to go free. The justice of the supreme governor of all the world requireth that sin should be punished ; all mankind have a general presumption that death is penal ; these fears make pardon a very inviting motive to them. These fears may be a while stifled in men, but they easily return and can no way be appeased, but by pardon and reconciliation with God, carried on in such a way, as they may be exempted from these fears ; therefore 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.'

3. Pardon of sins is very necessary to the end of reconciliation, which is living in a course of holy amity and state of friendship with God till we live with him for ever in heavenly glory. Here I am to prove three things :—(1.) That the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness ; (2.) That this holiness is carried on in a state of

love and friendship between God and us ; (3.) That pardon is the fittest way to breed this holiness and increase it.

[1.] That the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness ; for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, but that, reconciling our persons, we might quit our sins, and walk as those that are at good accord with him : Amos iii. 3, ‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed ?’ and 1 John ii. 7, ‘If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.’ Now pardon of sin hath a mighty influence upon holy walking ; justification and sanctification are distinct privileges, but they always go together, and the one doth exceedingly suit with the other. These two privileges, pardon and holiness, the one freeth us from the guilt, the other from the stain of sin. The one concerneth God’s interest, our subjection to him ; the other our own comfort. The one is the end, the other the means ; pardon is the means to holiness, and holiness is the end of pardon ; our general pardon is to put us into a state of acceptable obedience, our particular pardon to encourage us in it, and quicken us and excite us anew. The conditional and offered pardon is the means to work regeneration, and regeneration qualifieth for actual pardon : Titus iii. 7, ‘That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life ;’ and Heb. viii. 10–12, ‘For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest ; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more ;’ and Acts xxvi. 18, ‘To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith.’ And then actual pardon quickeneth us by love, to carry on that holiness of heart and life which God requireth ; for this mercy is the powerful motive to persuade us to obedience. Because he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, therefore we must love him and serve him all our days ; Luke i. 74, 75, ‘That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life ;’ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ‘For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them ;’ Titus ii. 11 12, ‘For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ;’ Rom. xii. 1, ‘I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’ His pardoning mercy and justification by Christ is the great enforcing argument. Those who are fetched up even from the gates of hell, and delivered from under the sentence of the law, and called into the state of God’s children, should thankfully accept the benefit, acknow-

ledge the benefactor, live in love to God and holiness, hate that sin they have repented of, and which hath been pardoned to them, and still hold on their course in a way of obedience, till their full recovery in the everlasting estate.

[2.] That this holiness is carried on in a state of love and friendship between God and us. Love beareth rule in the spiritual life, and pardon is the great ground of love: Luke vii. 47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her.' The great business of religion is to love God above all; and a man that is uncertain whether there be any such thing as pardon, how can he love God above himself and all other things? Self-love is very hardly cured, for what is nearer to us than ourselves? Therefore self-love is very deeply rooted in us, especially love of life, that it must be some very strong and powerful thing which can subdue it. Now nothing will do it, but the love of God. Propound the terrors of the Lord; that will not do it, men will not be frightened out of self-love. It must be a powerful love that must divert us from it; as one nail driveth out another, so doth one love drive out another. Now what can be more powerful than the love of God? 'It is as strong as death; many waters cannot quench it,' Cant. viii. 7. This prevailleth over our natural inclination, so that we shall not only forsake the sins and vanities which we now love, but also life itself: Rev. xii. 11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' This prevaleth over our natural inclination, so that we can lay all things at God's feet, and suffer all things, and endure all things for God's sake, yea, even life itself for his glory.

[3.] Pardoning mercy in Christ is the great argument which breedeth and feedeth this love. How can I love a God which I think will damn me, and may probably do it? Our turning to God must be by love, and our living to God and for God is carried on by love; but how can I come to him who seemeth so unlovely to me? Therefore God, to draw us into this amity and holy friendship, will be represented as willing to pardon and save us, and that in such an astonishing way, that more cannot be done to express his love: Rom. v. 8, 'Herein God commended his love to us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.' See at what an high rate he is content to pardon and save us, that he may draw our love and attract our hearts, which, under the terrors of guilt and condemning justice, would never have been brought to love him.

4. The forgiveness of sins is that which is most expressly, directly, and formally eyed in the death of Christ: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;' so Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood which was shed for the remission of sins;' so Heb. ix. 22, 'Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' Why is not sanctification mentioned? it was purchased by his blood as well as remission. It was guilt made his blood necessary for our recovery, and the depravation of the heart of man is part of the punishment, spiritual death as well as temporal and eternal. And to be polluted is our punishment as well as our sin, and the guilt of sin stoppeth our mercies, cuts off the intercourse between God and us: Isa. lix 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God;' and Rom. iii. 23, 'For all have sinned, and are come short of the glory

of God.' And when the obstruction is removed, and the offence given by our sins pardoned, the sanctifying of our nature followeth. If there had been nothing to do but to renew us by repentance and sanctification, that might have been done without the blood of the Son of God, as God at first gave his image freely; but his governing justice required, that before man was set up with a new stock of grace, there should be so great a price paid. Well then, this is mentioned as the great way of our reconciliation, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

5. This was the great difficulty, how, when sin was once entered, it might be remitted. Sin was the great make-bate between God and us; and it is not so slightly done away as most do imagine. The great mystery and design of grace was, how lapsed man, who was under the guilt of sin and the desert of punishment, should be restored to favour, the honour of God be safe, and the government of the world secured; or to make the pardon of man's sin, a thing convenient for the righteous and holy God to bestow without any impeachment of the honour of his wisdom, holiness, and justice; for there being a sentence of the law against us, by which we are condemned, John iii. 18, it would not seem to become the wisdom of God, that he should wholly quit his law, as if it were made in vain. His servant was loath to be found in a double mind, that his word should be yea and nay, 2 Cor. i. 18. Levity is an imputation which he seeketh earnestly to avoid there. Nor the holiness of God to be too favourable to sinners, Hab. i. 13, 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' Nor his justice; laws must not seem a vain scarecrow. In short, there must not be yea and nay with God; he must be demonstrated to us in his own divine perfections, and must not permit his laws and government to be despised or broken by a rebel world, without being executed upon them according to their true intent and meaning, or some equivalent demonstration of his justice, such as might vindicate both law and lawgiver from contempt. Well then, this was the great mystery and wonder of grace, 'that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;' that his wisdom found out a way to exercise pardoning, saving mercy, without any injury to his governing justice and truth, or giving any leave to sinners to flatter and embolden themselves in their sins with the thoughts of impunity, which are so natural to us. Therefore well might the apostle mention this privilege, as a special branch of our reconciliation with God.

6. This is the proper privilege of the new covenant, or covenant of grace, and the difference between it and the law; the law knew no way but saving the innocent, but the gospel discovered a way of saving the penitent. The law was fitted only to our innocence, and required us to continue as God left us, but the offer of pardon of sins suiteth with our lapsed, guilty estate; there God revealeth himself to the apostate world in that way which was fit for their recovery. The law knew no such thing as the forgiveness of sin; the fallen creature had thereby no hope, for the tenor there was, Do, and live; sin, and die; here a way is found out how our trespasses may not be imputed to us, and the edge of the curse abated, and God represented as pacified; and so this privilege was fitly mentioned by the apostle.

Use 1. Is to press us to enter into God's peace by looking after the pardon of sins. I shall only urge three things—(1.) The necessity; (2.) The readiness of God to bestow this benefit; (3.) The excellency of the privilege.

1. The necessity of obtaining this benefit. There are three notions, which press it upon sleepy sinners—law, judge, conscience: there is the law broken, the judge to whom we are responsible, conscience which raiseth fears in us because of the breach.

[1.] Remember there is a righteous law broken, and the sentence of it standeth unrepealed against you, till, in a broken-hearted manner, you sue out your pardon in the name of your mediator; condemned, though not executed, John iii. 18; and condemned to what? Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish, and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil;' and this will be executed, James ii. 13. The law is in force against those that refuse the gospel; therefore you must change copy, get this sentence reversed, or you are undone for ever. You have but a little time wherein to make your peace; there is but the slender thread of a frail life between you and execution; it is peace upon earth, Luke ii. 14. You are but reprieved during pleasure; that is the true notion of the present life: better never born, if you do not get off this curse. O christians, do you know what it is to have God an enemy? to be liable to his righteous wrath, to bear the burden of your own sins, to be answerable for his violated law?

[2.] The second awakening notion is that of a judge. I observe in scripture it is usually mentioned to quicken us to seek after repentance, and the pardon of sins. It is said, Acts x. 42, 43, 'He hath commanded us to testify and preach to the people, that he it is who was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead; to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;' and, Acts xvii. 30, 'He commandeth all men to repent, because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;' and Acts iii. 19-21. 'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things.' Why doth the scripture suggest this meditation? Partly, because our pardon is not complete till that day; now we have it under his hand in the word, under his seal by the Spirit, then from his mouth. And partly, because of the strictness of that day, now to consider that our case must be reviewed, that by our works and words we must be justified or condemned, Mat. xii. 36, 37. Surely we should make our peace, and be more watchful and serious for the future. And partly, considering who is judge, it is a strong motive to press us to receive his person, embrace his doctrine, and to put ourselves under the conduct of his Spirit; and depending upon the merit of his sacrifice, to use the appointed means in order to our full recovery and return to God.

[3.] The third working consideration is conscience, which anticipateth the judgment, and taketh God's part within us, rebuking us for sin—a secret spy that is in our bosoms, which handleth us as we handle it,

Rom. ii. 14, 15. Before the action, conscience sheweth us what is to be done; in the act, it correcteth; after, alloweth or disalloweth. As a man acts, so he is a party; as he censureth the action, so a judge. After the act, the force of conscience is most usually seen, more than before the fact, or in the fact; because, before, or in the action, the judgment of reason is not so clear and strong, the affections raising mists and clouds to darken the mind, and trouble it, and draw it on their side by their pleasing violence; but after the action, the violence of these things ceaseth, and is by little and little allayed. Guilt flusheth in the face of conscience; Judas, Mat. xxvii. 4, said, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.' Reason hath the greater force, doth more affect the mind with grief and fear. When a man hath sinned against his conscience, when the act is over, and the affection satisfied, and giveth place to reason, that was before contemned, when it recovereth the throne, it striketh through the heart of man with a sharp reproof for obeying appetite before itself, bringeth in terror and contest unto the mind, and the soul sits uneasy. Now then, because of this conscience of sin, let us sue out our pardon and discharge. Conscience may be choked and smothered, but the flame will break forth again; it is not quietly settled but by reconciliation with Jesus Christ; they shun it all that they can, but cannot get rid of it: 1 John iii. 20, 'For if our hearts condemn us,' &c. There is a hidden fear in the heart of man not always felt, but soon awakened; usually it speaketh out men's condition to them, when their hearts are unsound with God: Job xxvii. 6, 'My heart shall not reproach me all my days.' The heart hath a reproaching, condemning power against a man when he goeth wrong. None of us but feel these heart-smitings and checks; therefore we should consider of them. Now these should be noted, partly, because to smother and stifle checks of conscience produceth hardness of heart, if not downright atheism; and partly, because conscience, if it speaketh not, it writheth; and where it is not a witness, it is a register: and partly, because it is God's deputy, 1 John iii. 20, 21; and partly, because heaven and hell is often begun in conscience; heaven, in our peace and joy, which is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8, and 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' Sometimes hell, in our grief and fears as appeareth in Judas: Mat. xxvi., 4, 5, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood; and he went forth and hanged himself.' A good conscience is sweet company, as a bad is a great wound and burden. Well then, be settled upon sound terms, if you will not have your consciences upbraid you. Thus to the sleepy sinner.

2. To the broken-hearted I shall speak of God's readiness to pardon and to forgive. It is his name, Neh. ix. 17, 'But thou art a God ready to pardon.' It is his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18, compared with Exod. xxxiv. 7. It is his delight, Micah vii. 18. The case of any sinner is not desperate; a pardon may be had, Isa. lv. 7, 8, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; for my thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways, saith the Lord.' A sensible sinner, his condition is hopeful, Mat. ix. 13, with 28, 'Christ

came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ;' and, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' To a repenting sinner it is conditionally certain, 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' To those who seriously address themselves to this work, God sometimes vouchsafeth notable experiences, Ps. xxxii. 5. To those who have verified the sincerity of their faith and repentance, it is actually certain, evident and comfortable: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.' If they fulfil their covenant consent, confess sin so as to hate it and leave it, it is certain to them in *foro celi*, and in *foro conscientie*; and the more they come to God by Christ, and acquaint themselves with him, it groweth more firm: Job. xxii. 1, 'For I know that my redeemer liveth ;' and Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Then their reconciliation is secured to them by renewed evidences and assurances; habitual and familiar converse with him, as one friend doth with another, maketh it grow up into an holy security and peace; for the good and advantage of waiting upon God is better discerned when men have persevered in it, than when they first began.

3. The excellency of the privilege. Let me speak to the actually pardoned to admire the privilege, and get their hearts more affected with it.

[1.] In the general: This way of reconciling us by Christ that our trespasses may not be imputed to us, was the product of God's eternal wisdom and goodness. As when there was a search for wisdom, 'The depth saith, It is not in me ; the sea saith, It is not with me,' Job xxviii. 14; so when there is an inquiry for a satisfactory way of reconciling the creatures to God, so as may suit with God's honour, and appease our guilty fears, go to the light of nature: it saith, It is not in me; to the law, It is not in me; only the gospel revealeth it, and there it is learned and discovered. The light of nature apprehendeth God placable, for he doth continue many forfeited mercies to us, and doth not presently put us into our final estate, as the fallen angels are *in termino* presently, upon the fall. It apprehendeth that God is to be appeased by some satisfaction; hence those many inventions of lancing and cutting themselves, and offering their children, *et solo sanguine humano iram deorum immortalium placari posse*. The law that discovered our misery, but not our remedy, it sheweth us our sin, but no way of deliverance from sin and acceptance with God. The law can do nothing for sinners, but only for the innocent; it doth only discover sin, but exact obedience, and drive and compel men to seek after some other thing, that may save them from sin, and afford them a righteousness unto salvation; when man was once a sinner, the law became insufficient for those ends: Rom. viii. 3, 'It became weak through our flesh.' It was able to continue our acceptance with God in that condition in which we were first created, but after that man by sin became flesh, and had a principle of enmity in him against God, the law stood aside as weakened, and insufficient to help and save such an one. But then, the gospel yieldeth full relief, propounding such a way wherein God is glorified and the creature humbled, and due provision made for our comfort without infringing our duty, that we might be in a capacity comfortably to serve and enjoy God, who

otherwise had neither had a mind to serve him, nor a heart to love him. Thus mercy and justice shine with an equal glory; so do also his wisdom and holiness. Our necessity is thoroughly remedied, and God's love fully expressed. When we were lost children of wrath, under the curse, and no hand that could help us, then he set his hand to that work which none could touch, and put his shoulders under that burden which none else could bear. If John mourned when none was found worthy in heaven or earth to open the book of visions, and unloose the seals thereof, how justly might the whole creation mourn, because none was found worthy in heaven or in earth to repair this disorder, till the Son of God undertook it, and made himself an offering for sin. Oh! Let us give due acceptance and entertainment to this wonderful love and blessed privilege.

[2.] The happiness of being actually pardoned is exceeding great. This is notably set forth by the psalmist: Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile.' The privilege of the pardoned sinner is here set forth by three expressions: forgiving iniquity, covering sin, and not imputing transgression; and the manner of delivery is vehement and full of vigour—oh, the blessedness of the man! And it is repeated over and over again. Let us a little view the phrase; the Hebrew is, who is eased of his transgression. Junius; *qui levatur a defectione*. It compareth sin to a burden too heavy for us to bear. The same metaphor is used, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.' The second expression relateth to the covering of filth, or the removing that which is offensive out of sight; as the Israelites were to march with a paddle tied to their arms, that when they went to ease themselves, they might dig and cover that that came from them. Deut. xxiii. 14, you have the law, and the reason of it: 'For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp, therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee.' The third expression is, 'To whom the Lord imputeth not sin,' that is, doth not put sin to their account; where sin is compared to a debt, as it is also: Mat. vi. 12, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' So that sin is a burden, of which we should seek to be eased; filthiness, which we should get to be covered; debts, which we should get to be discharged. Oh, blessed we when it is so, when God lifts off from our shoulders the burden of the guilt of sin, covereth this noisome filthiness which maketh us so loathsome to him, and quits the debt and plea which he had in law against us. This forgiving or lifting of the burden is with respect to Christ's merit, on whom God laid the iniquities of us all, Isa. liii. 6; this covering is with respect to the adjudication of Christ's righteousness to us, which is a covering which is not too short; this not imputing is with respect to Christ's mediation or intercession, which in effect speaketh thus, What they owe, I have paid. Oh, the blessedness of the man! You will apprehend it to be so. What a burden sin is when it is not pardoned! Carnal men feel it not for the present, but they shall hereafter feel it. Now two sorts of conscience feel the burden of sin, a tender conscience, and a wounded conscience. It is grievous to a tender heart, that valueth

the love of God, to lie under the guilt of sin: Ps. xxxviii. 4, ‘Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a burden too heavy for me.’ Broken bones are sensible of the least weight: so Ps. xl. 12, ‘Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold of me.’ What kind of hearts have they who can sin freely and without remorse? Is it nothing to have grieved the Spirit of God, and violated his law, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to his wrath? A wounded conscience feeleth it also. There is a domestic tribunal which we carry about with us wherever we go, as the devils carry their own hell about with them, though not now in the place of torments: Prov. xviii. 14, ‘The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?’ Natural courage will bear up under common distresses which lie more without us, but when the spirit itself is wounded, what support under so great a burden? Ask Cain and Judas what it is to feel the burden of sin. All sinners are subject to this, and this bondage may be easily revived in them; a close touch of the word will do it, a sad thought, a pressing misery, a scandalous sin, a grievous sickness, a disappointment in the world. There needs not much ado to put a sinner in the stocks of conscience; as Belshazzar, that saw but a few words written on the wall, and ‘his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other.’ Again, it is filthiness which rendereth you odious in the sight of God; we ourselves cannot endure ourselves, when serious, John iii. 20; it maketh us shy of God’s presence. Once more, it is a debt which bindeth us over to everlasting punishment; and if we be not pardoned, the judge will give order to the jailer, and the jailer will cast us into the prison, ‘till we have paid the utmost farthing,’ Luke xii., last verse; and that will never be. How doleful is their case who are bound hand and foot and cast into hell, there to remain for ever and ever! Now put all together: certainly if you had ever been in bondage, and felt the sting of death, the curse of the law, or been acquainted with the fiery darts of Satan, or scorched with the wrath of God, or known the terrors of those, of whom God hath exacted this debt in hell, surely you wold say, Blessed is the man! happy are those whose sins are pardoned! Those that mind their work, that know what it is to look God in the face with comfort, that have this chain broken, the judge turned into a father, the tribunal of justice into a throne of grace, and punishment into a pardon, will say, Blessed is the man!

SERMON XXXVII.

And hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 COR. v. 19.

WE come now to the third thing, the means of application or bringing about this reconciliation on man’s part: θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν—hath placed in us. In which observe two things—

1. The matter of the charge, trust or thing entrusted—*The word of reconciliation*; called also, ver. 18, the ministry of reconciliation, that is, the gospel which revealeth the way of making peace with God, and is the charter and grant of Christ, and all his benefits from God, unto every one that will receive him. Now the gospel may be considered as written or preached; as written, so it is properly called the word of reconciliation; as preached, so, the ministry of reconciliation. The one serveth to inform, the other to excite; by the one the door of mercy is set open by discovering the admirable methods of grace in reclaiming the world; by the other, men are called upon, persuaded, and exhorted, to accept of the remedy offered.

2. The persons to whom he hath committed—*He hath put in us*, the apostles and their successors. (1.) The apostles are of chief consideration, for these, as master-builders, were to lay the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 10; and Eph. ii. 20, ‘And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner-stone.’ They were infallibly assisted and to be absolutely trusted in what they wrote: had the power of miracles, to evidence their mission and call; they were confined to no certain charge and country; therefore, this trust did belong to the apostles in all respects, chiefly in some respects to them only. (2.) Ordinary ministers are not to be excluded because they agree with the apostles as to the substance of their commission, which is to reconcile men to God, or to preach the gospel. The ordinary ministerial teaching is Christ’s institution, as well as that of the apostles: Eph. iv. 11, ‘He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.’ He that appointed prophets and apostles to write scripture, hath also appointed pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture. This is done *pleno jure*: Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, ‘All power is given me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you to the end of the world.’ By virtue of that authority given him by God, they are in the same commission, and have a promise of the same presence and Spirit. So also 1 Cor. iii. 5, ‘Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?’ As to the substance of the work, they do the same thing; as to the substance of the blessing, they are accompanied with the same Spirit. In both, as their ministry, for the matter of it, is the ministry of reconciliation, so for the power of it, it is the ministration of the Spirit unto life; only the one are immediately called, miraculously gifted, infallibly assisted, sent out to all the world; the other have an ordinary call, a limited place, but yet do the same work, in the same name, and are assisted by the same Spirit.

Doct. That much of the wisdom and goodness of God is seen in the course he hath taken for the applying of reconciliation.

In the merit, or way of procuring, in the branches, the restitution of his favour and image, we have seen already; now the way of applying that will appear.

1. God would not do us good without our knowledge, and therefore first or last he must give us notice; it is everywhere made as an act of

God's goodness to reveal the way of reconciliation. When the psalmist had discoursed of the pardon of sins, he presently addeth, Ps. ciii. 'He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel ;' and Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He hath shewed his word unto Jacob, and his judgments unto Israel ; he hath not dealt so with every nation ; as for his judgments, they have not known him ;' and Micah vi. 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ;' but especially in the new administration of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 'I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, nor every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest ;' and Isa. liii. 2, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' Those places show, that as it is a great favour, that the way of reconciliation was found out, so this is a new favour, that the way is so clearly revealed, that it is not left to our blind guesses. If God had intended to do us good, but would not tell us how, there would not have been due provision made for the comfort and duty of the creature : not for our comfort, for an unknown benefit intended to us can yield us no comfort. Christ's prophetical office is as necessary for our comfort as his sacerdotal : Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' We could take little comfort in him as an high priest, if he had not been also an apostle. The highest office in both the testaments was necessary to our comfort and peace. In the old testament, all the business of that dispensation was to represent him an high priest ; so in the new, as an apostle, that was to open the mind and heart of God to us, and show us how to be happy in the love and enjoyment of God. Nor could we understand our duty : all parties interested in the reconciliation must be acquainted with the way of it ; and therefore man must understand, what course God would take to bring about this peace. How else should he give his consent, or seek after the benefit, in such a solemn and humble manner, as is necessary ? And how else can we be sensible of our obligation, and be thankful, and live in the sense of so great a love ? John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift,' &c.

2. As God will not do us good without our knowledge, so not against our will and consent, and force us to be reconciled and saved, whether we will or no. Man is a reasonable creature, a free agent, and God governeth all his creatures according to their receptivity. With necessary agents, he worketh necessarily ; with free agents, freely ; a will is required on our parts : Rev. xxii. 17, 'Whosoever will ;' and Ps. cx. 3, 'His people shall be a willing people in the day of his power.' Their hearts are effectually inclined to accept of what God offereth. All that receive the faith of Christ, receive it most willingly, and forsake all to follow him : Acts ii. 41, 'They gladly received his word ;' then was that prophecy in part verified.

3. God will not work this will and consent by an imposing force, but by persuasion, because he will draw us 'with the cords of a man,' Hosea iv. 14 ; that is, in such a way and upon such terms as are proper and fitting for men. God dealeth with beasts by a strong hand of absolute power, but with man in the way of counsel, entreaties and persuasions, as he acted the tongue of Balaam's ass, to strike the sound of those words

in the air, not infusing discourse and reason : therefore it is said, Num. xxii. 28, 'He opened the mouth of the ass ;' but when he dealeth with man he is said 'to open the heart,' Acts xvi. 14 ; as inwardly by a secret power, so outwardly by the word so offered, that they attended. That is a rational way of proceeding, so to mind as to choose, so to choose as to pursue ; men is drawn to God in a way suitable to his nature :—

4. To gain this consent the word is a most accommodate instrument. I prove it by two arguments.

[1.] From the way of God's working, physically, morally, powerfully, sapientially. The physical operation is by the infusion of life ; the moral operation is by reason and argument. Both these ways are necessary in a condescension to our capacities ; *forliter pro te, Domine, suaviter pro me* ; God worketh strongly, like himself, and sweetly, that he may attemper his work to our natures and suit the key to the wards of the lock. Both these ways are often spoken of in scripture : John vi. 44, 45, 'No man can come unto me except the Father draw him ; as it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.' They are taught and drawn, so taught that they are also drawn and inclined ; and so drawn, as also taught, as it becometh God to deal with men. Therefore sometimes God is said to create in us a new heart, making it a work of power ; Ps. li. 10, 'And we are his workmanship created to good works,' Eph. ii. 10. Sometimes to persuade and allure ; Hosea ii. 15, 'I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her ;' Gen. ix. 27, 'The Lord shall persuade Japhet,' by fair and kind entreaties, draw them to a liking of his ways. The soul of man is determined to God, by an object without and a quality within. The object is propounded by all its qualifications, that the understanding may be informed and convinced, and the will and affections persuaded in a potent and high way of reasoning ; but this is not enough to determine man's heart without an internal quality or grace infused, which is his physical work upon the soul. There is not only a propounding of reason and arguments, but a powerful inclination of the heart, and so we are by strong hand plucked out of the snares of death. Both are necessary ; the power, without the word or persuasion, would be a brutish force, and so offer violence to our faculties. Now God doth not oppress the liberty of the creature, but preserve the nature and interest of his workmanship ; on the other side, the persuasion, offers of a blessed estate without power, will not work ; for if the word of God cometh to us in word only, but not in power, the creature remaineth, as it was, dead and stupid.

[2.] If we consider the impediments on man's part. The word is suited as a proper cure for the diseases of men's souls. Now these are ignorance, slightness, and impotency.

(1.) Ignorance is the first disease set forth by the notions of darkness and blindness, Eph. v. 8 ; 2 Peter. i. 9. We are so to spiritual and heavenly things. Though men have the natural power of understanding, yet no spiritual discerning, so as to be affected with, or transformed by, what they know, 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; no saving knowledge of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God, or their everlasting happiness. This is the great disease of human nature ; worse than bodily blindness, because they are not sensible of it : Rev. iii. 17, 'Thou thoughtest that thou wast rich, and increased with goods, and knowest not that thou art

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ;' because they seek not fit guides to lead them.

(2.) Slightness. They will not mind these things, nor exercise their thoughts about them : Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it,' would not let it enter into their care and thoughts ; Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?' Non-attendance is the great bane of men's souls ; it is a long time to bring them to ask, 'What shall I do to be saved ?'

(3.) Impotency and weakness, which lieth in the wilfulness and hardness of their hearts ; our *non posse* is *non velle* ; Ps. lviii. 4, 5, 'They are like the deaf adder which stoppeth her ear, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely ;' and Mat. xxiii. 37, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not ?' and Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to rule over us ;' John v. 40, 'They will not come unto me that they may have life ;' Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Israel would have none of me ;' Prov. i. 29, 'But they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.' You cannot, because you will not, the will and affections being engaged to other things. You have the grant and offer of mercy from God, but you have not an heart to make a right choice. If you could say, I am willing but cannot, that were another matter ; but I cannot apply myself to seek reconciliation with God by Christ, is, in true interpretation, 'I will not,' because your blinded minds and sensual inclinations have misled and perverted your will ; your obstinate and carnal wilfulness is your true impotency.

Now what proper cure is there for all these evils but the word of God ? Teaching is the proper means to cure ignorance, for men have a natural understanding. Warning us of our danger, and minding us of our duty, is the proper means to cure slightness, and to remove their impotency, which lieth in their obstinacy and wilfulness. There is no such means as to besiege them with constant persuasion, and the renewed offers of a better estate by Christ, for the impotency is rather moral than natural ; we do not use to reason men out of their natural impotency, to bid a lame man walk, or a blind man see, or a dead man live ; but to make men willing of the good they have neglected or rejected, we must persuade them to a better choice. In short, to inform the judgment, to awaken the conscience, to persuade the will, this is the work and office of the word by its precepts, promises, and rewards. It is true the bare means will not do it without God's concurrence, the influence and power of his Spirit ; but it is an encouragement to use the means, because they are fitted to the end, and God would not appoint us means which should be altogether vain.

5. That it is not enough that the word be written, but preached by those who are deputed thereunto for several reasons—

[1.] Partly because scripture may possibly lie by, as a neglected thing. The Lord complaineth, Hos. viii. 12, 'I have written to them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' Men slighted the word written, as of little importance or concernment to them, are little conversant in it ; therefore some are appointed that shall be sure to call upon us, and put us in mind of our eternal condition ; that may bring the word nigh to us, lay it at our doors, bring a special message of God to our souls : Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the

word of salvation sent.' He speaketh to all the world by his word, to you in particular by the special messages his servants bring you. It is sent to you, there is much of God in it; the word written hath its use to prevent delusions and mistakes, and the word preached hath also its use to excite and stir up every man to look after the remedy offered, as he will answer it to God another day.

[2.] Partly because the word written may not be so clearly understood, therefore God hath left gifts in the church, authorised some to interpret: as the eunuch was reading, and God sent him an interpreter: 'Philip said unto him, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except somebody guide me?' Acts viii. 30, 31. The scripture is clear in itself, but there is a covering of natural blindness upon our eyes, which the guides of the church are appointed and qualified to remove: Job xxxiii. 23, 'If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show a man his uprightness.' There are messengers from God authorised to speak in his name, to relieve poor souls, that they may soundly explain, forcibly express, and closely apply the truths of the word, that what is briefly expressed there by earnest and copious exhortations may be inculcated upon them, and the arrow may be drawn to the head, and they may more effectually deal with sinners, and convince them of their duty, and rouse them up to seek after the favour of God in Christ. Look, as darts that are cast forth out of engines by art, and fitted with feathers, are more apt to fly faster, and pierce deeper, than those that are thrown casually, and fall by their own weight; so, though the word of God is still the word of God, and hath its proper power and force, whether read or preached, yet when it is well and properly enforced with distinctness of language, vehemency and vigour of spirit, and with prudent application, it is more conducible to its end.

[3.] Because God would observe a congruity and decency. As death entered by the ear, so doth life and peace: Rom. x. 14, 15, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?' By the same sense by which we received our venom and poison, God will send in our blessings, work faith and repentance in us by the ministry of reconciliation. Besides, as vision and seeing are exercised in heaven, so hearing in the church; it is a more imperfect way of apprehension, but such as is competent to the present state: Job xlvi. 5, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee,' speaking of his extraordinary vision of God, which is a glimpse of heaven. Now we have a report of God, and his grace; satisfying ocular inspection is reserved for heaven; but now we must be contented with the one without the other.

6. That to preach the word to us, God hath appointed men of the same mould with ourselves, and entrusted them with the ministry of reconciliation. As the fowler catcheth many birds by one decoy, a bird of the same feather; so God dealeth with us by men of the same nature and affections, and subject to the law of the same duties, who are concerned in the message they bring to us as much as we are—men that know the heart of man by experience, our prejudices and temptations,

for the heart of man answereth to heart as the face in the waters, Prov. xxvii. 19; and so know all the wards of the lock, and what key will fit them. Now the love and wisdom of God appeareth herein,—

[1.] Because God will try the world by his ordinary messengers: Col. i. 21, ‘It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.’ We now live by faith and not by sight, and therefore he will not discover his own majesty, and send us nuncios and messengers out of the other world, or deal with us in an extraordinary way to lead us to faith and repentance, but send mean creatures like ourselves, in his name, who, by the manifestation of the truth, shall commend themselves to every man’s conscience, to see if they will submit to this ordinary stated course. We would have visions, oracles, miracles, apparitions, one come from the dead, but Christ referreth us to ordinary means; if they work not, extraordinary means will do us no good: Luke xvi. 30, 31, ‘And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went from the dead, they will repent; and he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’ When God used extraordinary ways, man was man still: Ps. lxxviii. 22–24, ‘Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation, though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the corn of heaven.’ They had their meat and drink from heaven, and yet they were rebels against God and unbelievers. Their victuals came out of the clouds, their water out of the rock; so that miracles will not convert, nor beget saving faith in them with whom ordinary means do not prevail. An oracle; Samuel thought Eli called him, when it was the Lord: 2 Peter i. 19.—*βεβαιότερον λόγον*, ‘We have a more sure word of prophecy.’ Or one from the dead. Christianity is the testimony of one that came from the dead, Jesus Christ. There can be no better doctrine, no more powerful persuasion, nor stronger confirmation, or greater cooperation. God trieth us now; but we would have all things subjected to the view of sense.

[2.] He magnifieth his own power, and useth a weaker instrument, that we might not look to the next hand, and gaze upon them, as if they, by their own power and holiness did make the dead live, or the deaf hear, or convert the sinner to God: 2 Cor. iv. 7, ‘We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us;’ that the efficacy of the gospel may be known to be from God alone, and not of men. He can blow down the walls of Jericho by a ram’s-horn, by weak men bring mighty things to pass. Treasure in an earthen vessel is supposed to allude to Gideon’s stratagem of a lamp in a pitcher, Judges vii. 16. What was that to fight against the numerous host of Midian? They brake their pitchers, and cried, ‘The sword of the Lord and Gideon!’ So we have this light in an earthen vessel; ‘the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,’ 2 Cor. x. 4. God chose τὰ μὴ ὄντα, 1 Cor. i. 28, ‘foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.’ God’s ordinances are simple in appearance, but full of power.

[3.] God dealeth more familiarly with us in this way, conveying his

mind to us by our brethren, who are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone ; such with whom we have ordinary and visible commerce. We read, Exod. xx. 18, 19, that the people when they heard the thunderings, they stood afar off, and said unto Moses, ‘ Speak thou unto us and we will hear ; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.’ It is a great mercy to man, that seeing he cannot endure that God should in glorious majesty speak to him, that he will depute men in his stead : Deut. xviii. 15, ‘ The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken ; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horcb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not ;’ that is, Christ principally, and all those sent in his name, and come in his stead. Nay, we are not able to bear the glorious ministry of the angels ; they would affright us, rather than draw to God. As Elihu saith to Job, chap. xxxiii. 6, 7, ‘ I that am formed out of the clay, am come to thee in God’s stead ; my terror shall not make thee afraid ;’ so may the ministers of the gospel say, We that are of the same mould and making, we are ambassadors in God’s stead, come to pray you to be reconciled to God. You need not be afraid of us nor shy of us.

[4.] There is more certainty this way, because by those whose fidelity in other things is approved to us, who cannot deceive us but they must deceive their own souls ; they know the desert of sin, and the danger by reason of it ; those who have had experience of the grace they preach ; as Paul was an instance of the gospel, as well as a preacher of it, 1 Tim. i. 17 ; and he saith, ‘ He did comfort others with the comforts wherewith he himself was comforted of God,’ 2 Cor. i. 4 ; spake from a sense and taste, commended his apostleship from his own knowledge ; who come not with a report of a report, who confirm their doctrines by their practice ; for they are to be examples to the flock ; and sometimes by their blood and sufferings, if need be, it is their duty at least—would these deceive us ? There are more rational, inducing grounds of probability in this way, than any extraordinary course that can be taken.

Use 1. Let us respect God’s institution the more. We see the reason of it, and the love and wisdom which God hath showed in it, and especially regard the way of reconciliation. Peace and life are tendered in his name to self-condemning and penitent sinners, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. This circumstance of the means teacheth us several things.

1. That it is not enough to look to the purchase, price, and ransom, that was given for our peace, but also the application of it ; for the apostle doth not only insist upon the giving of Christ, but also on the word of reconciliation by which it is offered to us. In the 18th ver., this text and the 20 ver., ‘ God may be in Christ reconciling the world to himself,’ and yet we perish for ever, unless we be reconciled to God ; and therefore the means of application must be regarded, as well as the means of impetration ; and as we bless God for Christ, so also for the ministry and ordinances.

2. It showeth that God hath not only a good will to us, but this

good will is carried on with great care and solicitude, that it may not miscarry at last. Here is wisdom mixed with love. As God was careful in laying a foundation of it by Christ, so you see with what wisdom the means are appointed, that this peace may be dispensed to us in the most taking way. Now God hath travailed so much in this matter, shall the gospel be cast away upon you? He hath set up an ordinance on purpose to treat with sinners.

3. That those things which God hath joined must not be separated, nor any part dispersed—Christ, Spirit, ministry. Christ purchaseth all, the Spirit applieth all, the ministry offereth all by the word. If we go to God for grace, if it were not for Christ, he would not look towards us; he sendeth us therefore to Christ, who is the golden pipe through which all the fatherly goodness of God passeth out unto us. If we go to Christ, he accomplishmeth all by his Spirit; it is the Spirit that by his powerful illumination must enlighten our minds, and open our hearts, and effectually renew and change the soul, Tit. iii. 5, 6. If we look to the Spirit, he sendeth us to the ordinances; there we shall hear of him in the word written and preached. Despise that course, and all stoppeth; therefore you must be meditating on his word, which is the seed of life; ‘be swift to hear;’ make more conscience to attend seriously to the dispensation of it. This last is most likely to be despised; men will pretend a love to Christ and the Spirit, a reverence to the word written, but despise the ministry, because they are men of like passions with ourselves. No; it is God’s condescension to our weakness, which cannot admit of other messengers, to employ such; therefore receive them as messengers of Christ: they work together with God, 1 Cor. iii. 9, they are labourers together with God: 2 Cor. vi. 1, ‘As workers together with God, we beseech you, receive not this grace in vain;’ and Christ saith, ‘he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me,’ Luke x. 16. What is done to a man’s apostle is done to himself; and Mat. x. 40, ‘He that receiveth you receiveth me.’ Christ meant not to stay upon earth visibly and personally to teach men himself; therefore he committed this dispensation to others, left it with faithful men, who are to manage it in his name.

4. Those who are enemies of the ministry of the word are enemies to the glory of God, and the comfort and salvation of God’s people. The glory of God: 2 Cor. i. 20, ‘For all the promises of God in him are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us;’ and the comfort of God’s people, ver. 24, ‘Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.’ And their too much preaching is their too much converting souls to God, and reconciling souls to God.

You hear not the word aright, unless it be a word of reconciliation to you, a means of bringing God and you nearer together, to humble you for sin, which is the cause of breach and distance: or to revive thy wounded spirit, or to make you prize and esteem the grace of the Redeemer, or more earnestly to seek after God by a uniform and constant obedience.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.
—2 COR. v. 20.

In these words you have the practical use and inference of the foregoing clause. Observe here—

1. An office put on those to whom the word of reconciliation is entrusted.
2. The value and authority of this office—*As if God did beseech you by us.*
3. The manner how this office is to be executed—*Pray you in Christ's stead.*
4. The matter or message about which they are sent—*Be ye reconciled to God.*

Doct. God hath authorised the ministers of the gospel in his own name and stead affectionately to invite sinners to a reconciliation with himself.

First, The office—‘We are ambassadors for Christ;’ that is the nature of our employment; and sent by God on purpose for this end, Eph. vi. 20, ‘For which I am an ambassador in bonds.’

1. Ambassadors are messengers; so are the ministry sent: John xvii. 18, ‘As thou hast sent me into the world, so also have I sent them into the world.’ ‘How can they preach except they be sent?’ Rom. x. 15.

2. There is not only a mission, but a commission; they are not only posts, and letter-carriers, but authorised messengers. Ambassadors do in a singular manner represent the person of the prince who sendeth them, and are clothed with authority from him; and so we have an authority for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. They are sent with great power to bind or loose out of the word, to pass sentence upon men’s eternal condition—of damnation on the impenitent, of life and salvation on them that repent and believe the gospel.

3. They are sent from princes to other princes. On the one side, it holdeth good; they come from the greatest prince that ever was, even from the prince of all the kings of the earth, Rev. i. 3. But to us poor worms they are sent, unworthy that God should look upon us, or think a thought of us; we were revolted from our obedience to him, but he treateth not, and dealeth not with us as traitors and rebels, but as persons of dignity and respect, that thereby we may be more induced to accept his offers. Ambassadors to obscure and private persons were never heard of, but such honour would he put upon us.

4. Ambassadors are not sent about trifles, but about matters of the highest concernment; so they are sent to treat about the greatest matters upon earth—the making up peace and friendship between God and sinners: Isa. lii. 7, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of peace!’ We are to publish the glad tidings of reconciliation with God. God might have sent heralds to proclaim war, but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. He might have sent them as

he sent Noah to the old world, to warn them of their destruction, or Jonah to Nineveh, but they came with an olive-branch in their mouths, to tell the world of God reconciled. Well then, we must regard the weight of the message; God's love and hatred are not such inconsiderable things, as that we should not trouble ourselves about them; it is his wrath maketh us miserable, and his love happy. Oh, how welcome to us should a message of love and peace with God be!

5. As to their duty: an ambassador and messenger must be faithful, keeping close to their commission as to the matter of their message, and be sincere and true as to the end of it: 2 Cor. ii. 17, 'For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.' We are for another, not for ourselves; our employment is to be proxies and negotiators for Christ, and this with all diligence, courage, and boldness: Eph. vi. 20, 'For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak;' as becometh a zeal for Christ's honour and the good of souls, the excellency of the message, and the gravity of our office, owning the truth in the face of dangers.

6. As to their reception and entertainment. Negatively—

[1.] They must not be wronged. Ambassadors are inviolable by the law of nations; but such is the ingratitude of the world, who are enemies to their own mercies, that they slight his message, use his ambassadors disgracefully, as Abner did David's, contrary to the law and the practice of all nations; as Paul was an ambassador in bonds, *ἐν ἀλύσει*, in a chain by which he was tied to his keeper; but God will not endure this, Ps. cv. 15. He hath given charge, 'Do my prophets no harm;' his judgments in his providence come for wrong done to his ministers, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. They misused his prophets, and the wrath of the Lord arose against the people, till there was no remedy. But the negative is not enough, not to wrong them; you ought to respect them, and receive them in the name of the Lord: 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;' and Gal. iv. 14, 'They received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' Surely it is meant with respect to the truth he preached; they received it with as much reverence and obedience as if delivered by Christ himself in person; otherwise he would not have mentioned that respect without detestation. Acts xiv. 14, the apostles rent their clothes when they would have given them divine honour. Well then, attention, credit, and obedience, is due to their message.

Secondly, The value and authority of this office. They sustain the person of God, and supply the place of Christ upon earth—'As though God did beseech you by us, and in Christ's stead.' This is added to bespeak credit and respect to their message.

1. Credit. Salvation is a weighty thing, and we had need be upon sure grounds, and not only have man's word but God's for it. Man's word breedeth but human credulity, and that is a cold thing; it is faith actuateth, and enliventh our notions and opinions in religion, and maketh them operative: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'The word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.'

The apostles' word, as it concerned them, was evidenced to be of God. Partly, by the evidence of the doctrine itself, which had God's impress and stamp upon it ; and to minds unprejudiced did commend itself to their consciences, 2 Cor. iv. 2-4 ; and partly, by the power and presence of God with them, Acts v. 31, 32, and 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5 ; *per modum efficientis causæ et per modum argumenti*, enlightening the mind, persuading the heart, outwardly by miracles, inwardly by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The objective testimony was made up of both, the internal sanctifying work and the external confirmation by miracles ; for it is said, 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'They were the epistle of Christ prepared by their ministry, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God.' He writeth the law upon the heart, Heb. viii. 10, and Jer. xxxi. 33 ; as it was the ministration of the Spirit, and carried a sanctifying virtue along with it, that their faith might be grounded upon the authority of God, opening their heart to receive the word, Acts xvi. 14. Now the ordinary ministers, the truth of their doctrine is evidenced by its conformity to the direction of the prophets and apostles : Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.' That is the standard and measure by which all doctrines must be tried to prevent the obstructions of error. Well then, though other doctrine be brought to us by men, yet our faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God ; it must be resolved into a divine testimony ; though men bring it, yet God is the author ; what the ambassador saith, the king saith, if he be true to his commission ; and therefore this word of reconciliation must be received as the word of God. When you come to an ordinance, the awe of God must be upon your hearts : Acts x. 33, 'We are all here before thee, to hear all things commanded thee of God.'

2. Respect. They speak in God's name, and in God's stead, as if God were beseeching, and Christ calling upon you : Luke x. 16, 'He that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me ;' it is Christ maketh the request for your hearts ; the Father sent him, and he us. It is a wonder, that after so much evidence of the christian faith, and the world hath had such sufficient trial of its goodness, efficacy, and power, any should suspect the voice of God speaking in the scriptures ; but it is a greater wonder, that believing the scriptures to be the voice of God, and the testimony of God, we should so slight it, and carry ourselves so neglectfully in a business of such importance ; as if either we suspected what we profess to believe, or the hatred and love of God were such inconsiderable things, that we did not much consider the one nor the other. If an oracle from heaven should warn you of danger, bid you seek the peace of God, or you are undone for ever, would not you seriously address yourselves to this business ? God doth by us beseech you, we in Christ's stead pray you to be reconciled. It is God's word that we hear and God's message that is sent to you. As Peter prescribeth ministers to speak as the oracles of God, 1 Peter iv. 11 ; so you must hear as the word of God ought to be heard, with reverence, and attention, and serious regard, as if God and Christ himself had spoken to you to press you to it. This word which you hear slightly, as it is

the testimony of God to you, so one day it will be the testimony of God against you ; this word shall judge you, John xii. 48. It doth not fall to the ground, but will be produced as a witness against your negligence and carelessness.

Thirdly, The manner. Here is beseeching and praying in and by his ministry which God hath instituted ; God cometh down from the throne of his sovereignty, and speaketh supplications. We must treat with men after the manner of Christ, when he was here upon earth, calling sinners to repentance with all the affectionate importunity imaginable.

1. With love and sweetness ; the manner must suit with the matter. We have an authority to exhort, yet in regard of the rich grace we offer, we must beseech and entreat with all gentleness and importunity. Paul in a like case doth the like elsewhere : Rom. xii. 1, ‘ I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.’ Church power and civil power differ much. They go altogether by way of injunction and command, we must beseech ; they compel, we must persuade. The power of Christ’s ambassadors is a ministry not a domination ; we are to deal with the will and the affections of men, which may be moved and inclined, but not constrained. Again, there is a difference between the law and the gospel ; the law doth not beseech, but only command and threaten : ‘ You shall have no other gods before me : ‘ Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c.’ ; but we, as in Christ’s stead, pray you to be reconciled. The law is peremptory, ‘ I am the Lord ;’ the gospel wooeth before it winneth, and reasoneth with us. The gospel being a charter of God’s love, we must use a dispensation suitable, invite men to God in a loving sweet way ; and surely, if men despise God’s still voice, their condemnation will be very just. When Nabal slighted David’s kind message, he marched against him in fury, 1 Sam. xxv. 13, 14, to cut off all that belonged to him. If we despise the still voice, we must expect the whirlwind, ‘ I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded,’ Prov. i. 24, ‘ I will laugh at their calamity.’ How can we expect that God should hear our prayers, if we be deaf to his requests ; and when we in his stead pray you to be reconciled, and still you refuse to hear ?

2. Meekness and patience. Praying and beseeching doth not only note meekness in the proposal, but perseverance also, notwithstanding the many delays and repulses, yea rough entertainment, that we meet with at the hands of sinners : 2 Tim. ii. 25, ‘ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.’ One reason why God will make use of the ministry of men is because they know the heart of man, how much he is wedded to his folly, how angry he is to be put out of his fool’s paradise, and to be disturbed in his carnal happiness : Titus iii. 2, 3, ‘ Showing meekness to all men, for we ourselves were sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures.’ And therefore we must wait, exhort, warn, and still behave ourselves with much love and gentleness, that compassion to souls may bear the chief rule in our dealing with them.

Fourthly, The matter : ‘ Be reconciled to God.’ We have heard

much of the way of God's reconciliation with us; now let us speak of our reconciliation with God, what is to be done on man's part.

1. Let us accept of the reconciliation offered by God. Our great business is to receive this grace so freely tendered to us: 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We, as workers together with him, beseech you not to receive this grace in vain,' that is, by a firm assent, believing the truth of it; 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,' and Eph. i. 13; 'For God hath sent forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25. And thankfully esteeming and prizing the benefit, for our acceptance is an election and choice: Phil. iii. 8, 9, 'I count all things to be dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'And having found one goodly pearl of great price, he sold all and bought it,' depending upon the merit, worth, and value of it; 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know in whom I have believed.' And venturing our souls and our eternal interests in this bottom, sue out this grace with this confidence, Ps. xxvii. 3, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of God for ever.'

2. We must accept it in the way God hath appointed, by performing the duties required on our part. What are they? Repentance is the general word, as faith is our acceptance. In it there is included—

[1.] An humble confession of our former sinfulness and rebellion against God. I have been a grievous sinner, a rebel, and an enemy to God, and this to the grief and shame of his heart: Jer. iii. 13, 'I am merciful, and will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine iniquity which thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and disobeyed my voice, saith the Lord;' and 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' When they begged the favour of the king of Israel, they came with ropes about their necks, 1 Kings xx. 31. The creature must return to his duty to God, in a posture of humiliation and unfeigned sorrow for former offences.

[2.] We must lay aside our enmity, and resolve to abstain from all offences which may alienate God from us. If we have any reserve, we draw nigh to God with a treacherous heart, to live like rebels under a pretence of a friendship: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;' and Job xxxiv. 31, 32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.' Unless you put away the evil of your doings, the anger continueth; and it is inconsistent with a gracious estate to continue in any known sin without serious endeavours against it. 'What peace as long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel remaineth?'

[3.] We must enter into covenant with God, and devote ourselves to become his: 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Yield yourselves unto the Lord;' and Rom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves unto God.' There must be an entire resignation and giving up ourselves to be governed and ordered by him at his will and pleasure: Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Give up the keys of the heart, renouncing all

beloved sins. We then, depending upon the merit of his sacrifice, put ourselves under the conduct of his word and Spirit, and resolve to use all the appointed means in order to our full recovery and return to God.

3. Our being reconciled to God implieth our loving God; who loved us first, 1 John iv. 19. For the reconciliation is never perfect, till there be a hearty love to God; there is a grudge still remaining with us; faith begets love, Gal. v. 6. Repentance is the first expression of our love; the sorrowing, humbling part of it is mourning love; the covenanting part, either in renouncing, is love, abhorring that which is contrary to our friendship, into which we are entered with God; the devoting part is love, aiming at the glory of him who hath been so good. All our after-carriage is love, endeavouring to please. You will never have rest for your souls till you submit to this course, and be in this manner at peace with God: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' God complaineth of his people by the prophet, that 'they forget their resting-place,' Jer. i. 6. Men seek peace where it is not to be found, try this creature and that, but still meet with vanity and vexation of spirit; like feverish persons, who seek ease in the change of their beds.

SERMON XXXIX.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.
—2 COR. v. 20.

Doct. The great business of the ministers of the gospel is to persuade men to reconciliation with God.

Use. Let me enter upon this work now—(1.) To sinners. (2.) To those reconciled already, as these were to whom he wrote; he presseth them further to reconcile themselves to God.

First, To sinners.

Will you be reconciled to God, sinners? Here I shall show you—(1.) The necessity of reconciliation. (2.) God's condescension in this business. (3.) The value and worth of the privilege. (4.) The great dishonour we do to God in refusing it.

1. The first motive is the necessity of being reconciled, by reason of the enmity between God and us: Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' We are enemies to God, and God is an enemy to us. I shall prove both: the one to convince, the other to excite and rouse us up. By sin man is an enemy to God, and hateth him. As to the punishment, God is an enemy to man, and will avenge himself upon him. What greater sin than to be enemies to God? What greater misery than that God should be an enemy to us? Surely where both

these are joined, it should awaken us, and we should get out of this condition as fast as we can.

[1.] We are enemies and rebels to God. In our natural estate, we are all so; we will not own this, and are ready to defy any that should say we are God's enemies or haters of God; we count him to be a most profligate and forlorn wretch, that should profess himself to be so. That little spark of conscience, that is left in corrupt nature, will not suffer men openly to own themselves to be so; they are ready to say as Hazael, 'Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this thing?' Yet the matter is clear; we are in our natural estate enemies to God.

(1.) It is possible that human nature may be so far forsaken, as that among men there should be found haters of God and enemies to him: Rom. i. 30, *θεοστυγεῖς*, 'Haters of God'; and Ps. cxxxix. 21, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?' There are an opposite party to God in the world, some that hate him, as well as some that love him; some that walk contrary to him, that oppose his interest, oppress his servants: Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 'They that hate thee are risen up against us without a cause.' The thing is possible then; all the business is to find who they are.

(2.) There are open enemies to God, and secret enemies. The open enemies are such as bid defiance to him, blaspheming his name and breaking his laws, opposing his interests and oppressing his servants. The open enmity is declared; the secret is carried on under a pretence of friendship, by their living in the church, and having a form of godliness, and a blind zeal, John xvi. 2. Not only Turks, and infidels, and apostates, but also profane wretches, though they live within the verge of the church, yet if they go on still in their trespasses, Ps. lxviii. 21, 'But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of all those that go on in their trespasses;' if they oppose whatsoever of God is set a-foot in their days, they are *θεομάχοι*, Acts v. 39, 'Fighters against God'; and Acts xxiii. 9, 'Let us not fight against God.' Or if they oppose his servants, if they be not lovers of those which are good, 2 Tim. iii. 3, *ἀφιλάγαθοι*, 'despisers of those which are good.' God and his people have one common interest. Those that malign his servants hate him; for they hate his image, Prov. xxix. 27, 'The upright in his way is an abomination to the wicked.' There is a secret rising of heart against those that are stricter, and have more of the image of God, than they; there is an old enmity between the seeds, as between the raven and the dove, the wolf and the lamb; now this is enmity against God.

(3.) There are enemies to God directly and formally; and implicitly and by interpretation. Directly and formally, where there is a positive enmity against God, whether secret or open. The expressions of the open enmity against God have been already mentioned, a hatred of his ways and a rage against his servants; the secret positive enmity is seen in the effect of slavish fear, which only apprehended God as an avenger of sin; and so men hate those whom they fear. We have wronged God exceedingly, and know that he will call us to an account; and being sensible of a revenge, we hate him. All that are afraid of God, with such a fear as hath torment in it, *aut extinctum Deum cupiunt, aut exarmatum*; it is a pleasing thought to them if no God,

Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' As the devils tremble at their own thoughts of God, it would be welcome news to them, if there were none ; these are enemies directly and formally. But now by interpretation, that will make us more work ; certainly there is such a thing as hatred by interpretation, as appeareth, Prov. viii. 36, 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul : all that hate me love death.' So where it is said, 'He that spareth the rod hateth his son,' Prov. xiii. 24. His fault is fond indulgence, but a wrong love is an interpretative hatred. Now apply it to the case between us and God ; and those that pretend no such thing can be charged upon them, may yet hate God. Three ways we may be guilty of this interpretative hatred and enmity.

(1st.) If we love not God at all ; for not to love is to hate. In things worthy to be loved there is no medium ; for he that is not with God is against him, Mat. xii. 30 ; and he that loveth him not hateth him. To be a neuter is to be a rebel ; and you speak all manner of misery to that man of whom you may say, 'that he loveth not God.' So Christ brandeth his enemies : John v. 42, 'But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.' They pleaded zeal for the sabbath, and opposed Christ for working a miracle on that day. Men are in a woful condition if they be void of the true love of God, love being the fountain of desiring communion with God, and the root of all sound obedience to him ; and certainly if men love not God, being so deeply engaged, and God so deserving their love, they hate him and are enemies to him, there being no neutral or middle estate : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' It is danger enough not to love him, though we break not out into open opposition against his ways.

(2dly.) If we love him not so much as we ought to do, or not so much as we love some other thing ; for a lesser love is hated in the sacred dialect, as we see in the law of the hated wife, not that the one was not loved at all or absolutely hated, but not loved so much as the others, Deut. xxi. 15, 16 ; so in that proverb, Prov. xiv. 20, 'The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends.' There hatred is taken for slighting, or a less degree of love ; so in this case between us and God, Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me ;' in Luke it is said, Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man hate not father and mother, and brother and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.' Here to love less is to hate ; so Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other ; ye cannot serve God and mammon.' God is of that excellent nature, that to esteem anything above him or equal with him is to hate him. Now because men love the world, and the things of the world as well, yea more than God, they hate him, and are enemies to him. Now all carnal men are guilty of this, 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,' φιλήδοναι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι ; and therefore it is positively said, James iv. 4, 'That the friendship of the world is enmity with God ; and whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy to God.' Oh ! that men would look upon things as the scripture expresseth them ; that the love of the world is the highest contempt and affront

which can be offered to God. In comparison of our love to him, all the pleasures and contentments of the world should be hated, rather than loved. So far as we set our hearts upon these things, so far they are deadened and estranged from God, and God is easily parted with for the world's sake. If a father should come to a child and say, If you love such a young man or woman, you cannot love me, and I shall take you for my utter enemy, would not any ingenuous child, rather than be an enemy to his father, part with his vain and enticing company?

(3dly.) By interpretation still we are said to hate God and to be enemies to him, if we rebel against his laws, and love what God hateth : so, ‘The carnal mind is said to be enmity to God, because it is not subject to the law of God,’ Rom. viii. 7. Love is determined by obedience, 1 John v. 3, and hatred by disobedience : ‘That hate me, and keep not my commandments.’ We apprehend God standeth in the way of our desires, because we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and security, as we might otherwise, were it not for his law ; we hate God, because he commandeth that which we cannot and will not do ; therefore an impenitent person and an enemy to God are equivalent expressions.

(4.) There is a twofold hatred: *Odium abominationis* and *odium inimicitiae*, the hatred of abomination and the hatred of enmity ; the one is opposite to the love of goodwill, the other to the love of complacency : Prov. xxix. 27, ‘The wicked is an abomination to the righteous.’ He hateth not his neighbour with the hatred of enmity, so as to seek his destruction, but with the hatred of offence, so as not to delight in him as wicked. In opposition to the love of complacency, we may hate our sinful neighbour, as we must ourselves much more ; but in opposition to the love of benevolence, we must neither hate our neighbour, nor our enemy, nor ourselves. Apply this now to the case between God and us : it will be hard to excuse any carnal men from either hatred, certainly not from the hatred of offence or abomination, there being such an unsuitableness and dissimilitude between God and them. In pure nature we were created after his image, and then we delighted in him, but when we lost our first nature, we lost our first love, for love is grounded upon likeness: φίλον καλούμεν ὄμοιον ὄμοιῷ κατ’ ἀρέτην ; we love those that have like affections, especially in a good thing. Now there being such a dissimilitude between God and us, we love what he hateth, and hate what he loveth ; therefore how can there choose but be hatred between us ? How can we delight in a holy God, and a God of pure eyes delight in filthy creatures ? What can carnal man see lovely in God ? Zech. xi. 8, ‘My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me.’ And therefore from this hatred of loathing, offence, and abomination, none can excuse them. Till they come to hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth, there is still the hatred of offence : Prov. viii. 13, ‘The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,’ &c. And for the hatred of enmity, which is an endeavour to do mischief, and seeketh the destruction of the thing hated, we cannot excuse the wicked from that neither, for there is a secret positive enmity, as you have heard before.

(5.) God's enemies carry on a twofold war against God, offensive and defensive.

(1st.) The offensive war is when men rebel against God's laws, and seek to beat down his interest in the world, and employ their faculties, mercies, and comforts as weapons of unrighteousness against God: Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, $\delta\pi\lambda\alpha$, or weapons, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God.' Our faculties, talents, interests, are employed either as armour of light for God, or as weapons of unrighteousness against God. And warring Satan's warfare I call the offensive war against God.

(2dly.) The defensive war is when we slight his word, and resist the motions of his Spirit, Acts vii. 51. When God bringeth his spiritual artillery to batter down all that lifteth up itself against the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, he layeth siege to their hearts, and battereth them daily by the rebukes, and the motions of his Spirit; yet men will not yield the fortress, but stand it out to the last, and delight to go on in their natural corruption, and will not have Christ to reign over them; and so they increase their enmity, and double their misery, by a resistance of grace. So that they are rebels not only against the law, but the gospel, and stand out against their own mercies; as they are enemies to an earthly prince, that not only molest him with continual inroads and incursions, but those also that keep his towns against him. Well then, all this that is said sheweth; that though men do not break out into open acts of hostility against God, yet they may hate him, be enemies to him. Though they may not be professed infidels, yet secret enemies, under a show of respect to his religion, enemies by interpretation, as they love him not, or love him less, or impenitently continue in a course of disobedience. If they seek not the destruction of God's interest in the world, yet their soul loatheth God; the thoughts of his being are a trouble to them; and they do not walk in his ways, nor will not be reclaimed from their folly by any of his entreaties.

[2.] Now let me prove, that God is an enemy to a carnal man or man defiled with sin. He is so, though he doth not stir up all his wrath, though he bestoweth many favours upon us in the blessings of this life; he is so, though he useth much patience towards us; he is so, though he vouchsafeth us many tenders of grace to reclaim us. All these things may consist with the wrath of God; he is so, whatever purposes of grace, or secret good-will he may bear to any of us from everlasting; for our condition is to be determined by the sentence of his law, and there we are children of wrath even as others, Eph. vi. 3; liable to the stroke of his eternal vengeance: Ps. v. 5, 'Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.' They can look upon themselves as only objects of his wrath and hatred. Now this hatred and enmity of God is seen, partly as all commerce is cut off between God and them; Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear;' so that he will not hold communion with us in the Spirit. Partly, in that he doth often declare his displeasure against our sins: Rom. i. 18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;' and Heb. ii. 2, 'Every transgression, and every disobedience received

a just recompence of reward.' Every commandment hath its trophies, to show that God hath gotten the best of sinners; some are smitten because they love not God, and put not their trust in him; some, for false worship; some, for blaspheming his name, and profaning his day. Sometimes he maketh inquisition for blood, sometimes for disobedience to parents and governors; by these instances God sheweth, that he is at war with sinners. It may be the greatest expression of God's anger, if he doth not check us and suffer us to go on in our sins: Hosea iv. 17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone;' word, providence, conscience, let him alone: Ps. lxxxii. 12, 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' It is the greatest misery of all to be left to our own choices; but however it be, whether God strike or forbear, the Lord is already in battle array, proclaiming the war against us: Ps. vii. 11, 12, 'God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and will make it ready: He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. He hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors.' God's justice, though it doth for a while spare the wicked, yet it doth not lie idle; every day they are a-preparing and a-fattening. As all things work together for good to them that love God; so all things are working for the final perdition of the obstinately impenitent: God can deal with them *eminus*, at a distance, he hath his arrows; *cominus*, hand to hand, he hath his sword; he is bending his bow, whetting his sword. Now when God falleth upon us, what shall we do? Can we come and make good our party against him? Alas, how soon is a poor creature overwhelmed, if the Lord of hosts arm the humours of our own bodies, or our thoughts against us? If a spark of his wrath light into the conscience, how soon is a man made a burden and a terror to himself? God will surely be too hard for us: Job ix. 4, 'Who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered?' What can we get by contending with the Lord? One frown of his is enough to undo us to all eternity. Can Satan benefit you? The devil that giveth you counsel against God, can he secure you against the strokes of his vengeance? No, he himself is fallen under the weight of God's displeasure and holden in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; therefore think of it while God is but bending his bow, and whetting his sword. The arrows are not yet shot out of the terrible bow, the sword is but yet a-whetting, it is not brandished against us; after these fair and treatable warnings we are undone for ever, if we turn not speedily; it is no time to dally with God. We read, Luke xiv. 31, of a king that had but ten thousand, and another coming against him with twenty thousand: what doth he do? 'While he is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.' You are no match for God; it is no time to dally or tarry, till the judgment tread upon our heels, or the storm and tempest of his wrath break out upon us. The time of his patience will not always last, and we are every day a step nearer to eternity. How can a man sleep in his sins, that is upon the very brink of hell and everlasting destruction? Certainly a change must come, and in the ordinary course of nature we have but a little

time to spend in the world ; therefore since the avenger of blood is at our heels, let us take sanctuary at the Lord's grace, and run for refuge to the hope of the gospel, Heb. vi. 18, and make our peace ere it be too late. Cry, Quarter, as to one that is ready to strike : Isa. xxvii. 5, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.' This is the first motive.

2. God's condescension in this business.

[1.] That he being so glorious, the person offended, who hath no need of us, should seek reconciliation : it is such a wonder for God to offer, that it should be the more shame for us to deny. For us to sue for reconciliation, or ask conditions of peace, that is no wonder, no more than it is for a condemned malefactor to beg a pardon ; but for God to begin, there is the wonder. If God hath been in Christ reconciling the world to himself, then we may pray you to be reconciled. And surely you should not refuse the motion ; we did the wrong, and God is our superior, and hath no need of us. Men will submit, when their interest leadeth them to it, Acts xii. 20, 'They desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' We should make the motion, for we cannot subsist without him. What is there in man, that God should regard his enmity, or seek his friendship ? He suffereth no loss by the fallen creature, angels, or men ; why then is there so much ado about us ? He was happy enough before there was any creature, and would still be happy without them. Surely thy enmity or amity is nothing to God ; surely for us to be cross, and not to mind this, is a strange obstinacy. Men treat when their force is broken, when they can carry out their opposition no longer, but God, who is so powerful, so little concerned in what we do, he prayeth you to be reconciled.

[2.] In that he would lay the foundation of this treaty in the death of his Son : Col. i. 21, 'He hath reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death ;' therefore, 'we pray you to be reconciled.' God, to secure his own honour, to make it more comfortable to us, would not be appeased without satisfaction. Though his nature inclined him to mercy, yet he would not hear of it till his justice were answered, that we might have nothing to perplex our consolation, and that we might have an incomparable demonstration of his hatred against sin, and so an help to sanctification. He would have our satisfaction and debt paid by him who could not but pay it with overplus. Since he hath not spared his only Son, we know how much he loveth us, and hateth sin. Oh ! woe unto us if now, after God hath been at such a great deal of cost, we should slight the motion ; angels wonder at what you slight, 1 Peter i. 12. Shall the blood of Christ run a-wasting ? Mind the business I pray you. God hath laid out all his wisdom upon it, and will not you take it into your thoughts ? God's heart was much set upon it, or else he would never have given his Son to bring it about. It is the folly of man to part with things of worth for trifles ; as Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, Lysimachus his kingdom for a draught of water. Surely we cannot imagine this of the wise God ; when he hath been at such expense, it is not for a matter of nothing ; therefore we should the more regard it.

[3.] In that he hath appointed a ministry of reconciliation, and

authorised some as solemn messengers to tender this grace to us in his name; therefore, ‘as ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’ God might have contented himself with putting his thoughts into scripture, and given us the word and doctrine of reconciliation only; and truly that is a great mercy. Heathens are left to the puzzle and distraction of their own thoughts, and know not how God shall be appeased; but because that blessed book may possibly lie by as a neglected thing, he will have some that shall put us in mind daily of his design of saving the world by Christ. If he would send messengers, he might have sent heralds to proclaim war, but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. Surely upon this account we should be welcome to you: Isa. lli. 7, ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;’ how dirty soever their feet be with the journey. Our message is not to require satisfaction for the wrongs done to the crown of heaven or to denounce war, but a matter of peace; not only to beg a correspondency of traffic, but a treaty about marriage, and so to enter into the strictest amity with God; ‘Even that you may be married unto Christ, to bring forth fruit unto God,’ Rom. vii. 4. Yet farther,

[4.] These messengers are under a charge to manage God’s message with all wisdom and faithfulness, and diligence, Mark xvi. 15, 16, to preach the gospel to every creature, to rich and poor, learned and unlearned. And woe be to them if they be not diligent, warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, Col. i. 28. Christ hath conjured them by all their love to his person to do it, John xxi. 15, 16, ‘Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.’ If we have any respect to our Lord, we must be diligent in offering peace to all that are willing to repent and believe. This work is seriously commended to us; ye profess to be my servants, and therefore by all the love you have to me, I conjure you. I shall not take it that you love me, if you have not a care of my sheep and my lambs. You know the temptations, prejudices, and hatred of those you have to do with; therefore pray them to be reconciled. And

[5.] Consider the terms which God requireth, which are only that we we should render ourselves capable of his favour, by entering into covenant with him. On God’s part all things are ready; now we pray you to be reconciled; that is, do you enter into covenant with him. God in the covenant is our friend. Abraham is called the friend of God, James ii. 23; 2 Chron. xx. 7, ‘Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever;’ Isa. xli. 8, ‘The seed of Abraham my friend.’ Abraham was God’s confederate, and they loved entirely, as one friend doth another. In the covenant you take God for your God, and God taketh you for his people; you enter into a league offensive and defensive, to hate what God hateth, and to love what God loveth; God promiseth and engageth to bless, and you to obey.

3. The value of this privilege; it is worth the having. What do we plead with you about, but the favour of God and reconciliation with him by Christ? God found out the way; Christ purchased it; the angels first published it, Luke ii. 14. There are many privileges

depend upon it, as ; (1.) Sanctifying grace. God, being propitiated in Christ, giveth us the first grace, and causeth us to repent and believe in Christ ; for on the behalf of Christ, it is given us to believe, Phil. i. 29, and the regenerating Spirit is shed upon us by Christ. Now when we repent and believe, we are made capable of more of the sanctifying Spirit, Acts ii. 38. The Holy Ghost is given to them that obey : Acts iii. 32, ‘And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.’ And a farther measure of grace upon our actual reconciliation : Gal. iv. 6, ‘And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ (2.) The pardon of sins. When we are regenerated, our sins are actually pardoned : Acts xxvi. 18, ‘To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me ;’ Heb. viii. 10-12. We are released from the eternal punishment, and God quits his controversy against us. (3.) Communion with God, favour, image, and fellowship, go still together ; they were lost together. Before we could not look God in the face, or lift up the head to him, or think of him without trembling ; there is a God, but he is my enemy ; every prayer revived our guilt ; but now we have access with boldness, and confidence of welcome and audience, whenever we have occasion to make use of God, Heb. iv. 16. When David heard that Saul was pacified towards him, he was in his presence as in times past, 1 Sam. xix. 7. The flaming sword, which kept the way to the tree of life, is removed. In our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, in death itself we have a God to go to, to move for relief, to whom to commit our souls. (4.) We have solid consolation, rest, and peace in ourselves, for the chief cause of our fear and sorrow is done away ; our sin is pardoned and subdued, and the eternal punishment released. Till this be, you can never have any rest for your souls ; till you are at peace with God, and submit to the course prescribed by him for your reconciliation, Mat. xi. 28, 29. One great fault of man is that he doth not take a right course to quiet his soul. God complaineth of his people by the prophet, ‘That they had forgotten their resting-place,’ Jer. l. 6 ; that is, they had forgotten God, their only trust. Men seek peace where it is not to be found, in this creature and that, but still meet with vanity and vexation of spirit, like feverish persons who seek ease in the change of their beds. (5.) The fruition of God. Be reconciled to him, and in time you shall be admitted to see his face. This is the end of all ; for this end Christ died, for this end we are sanctified and justified, and adopted into God’s family, and for this end we believe and hope, and labour and suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce the world. It is Christ’s end, Col. i. 21, 22 ; and it is our end, 1 Peter i. 9 ; and will certainly be the fruit of our reconciliation : Rom. v. 11, ‘For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.’

4. The fourth motive is, the great dishonour we do to God in refusing it. You despise two things, which men cannot endure should be despised, their anger and love. For anger Nebuchadnezzar is an instance, who commanded to heat the furnace seven times hotter, Dan.

iii. 19 ; for love David, when Nabal despised his courteous message, Now you despise the love and wrath of God, as if they were inconsiderable things not to be stood upon.

First, The terror of his wrath, as if not to be stood upon. But do you know the power of his anger, and what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God ? Can you think of an eternity of misery without horror ? One that hath been a little scorched in the flames of God's wrath dareth not have slight thoughts of it. Oh ! christians, as you would escape this blackness of darkness, eternal fire, and the horrible tempest which is reserved for the wicked, flee from wrath to come. Secondly, His love. Thou despisest his Christ, as if his purchase were nothing worth ; thou despisest his institutions, which are ordered with such care for thy good. Oh ! what horrible contempt of God is this, that thou refusest to be friends with him, after all his intreaties and condescension ! How will you answer it at the last day ? In hell thy heart will reproach thee for it.

Secondly, To those that have been reconciled with God before. Be yet more reconciled to God ; get more testimonies of his favour, lay aside more of your enmity. I have four things to press upon them.

1. To renew your covenant with God by going over the first work of faith and repentance again and again, from ' faith to faith,' Rom. i. 17 ; not questioning your estate, but bewailing your offences, Job xiii. 10 ; and renewing your dedication to God. The covenant is the covenant of God's peace, Isa. liv. 10. This covenant needeth to be renewed, partly because of our frequent breaches. It is not a work that must be once done and no more, but often. We have hearts that love to wander, and need tie upon tie ; therefore renew the oath of your allegiance unto God. We are apt to break with him every day. Partly, that you may give Christ a new and hearty welcome into your souls. We are baptized but once, but we receive the Lord's supper often, ὅστις implieh πολλάκις. That is our business there, to make the bond of our duty more strong, and to tie it the faster upon our souls.

2. To increase your love to God ; that is reconciliation on our part : Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind ;' Luke x. 27, 'With all thy strength,' some add, 'might.' Now we grow up into this by degrees ; 'Love with all thy mind.' The mind and thoughts are more taken up with God. Of the wicked it is said, Ps. x. 4, 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God ; God is not in all his thoughts ;' and Job xxi. 14, 'They say unto God, Depart from us ; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Now it must be otherwise with you : Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord.' You must still be remembering God ; 'Love with all the heart.' Let will and affections be more carried out to God that your desires may be after him, your delights in him, and valuing the light of his countenance more than all things, Ps. lvi. 7. Prizing communion with him. An hypocrite doth not delight himself in God, but a sincere christian will : Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I maydwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in histemple ;' Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord,

and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart' and testify it by conversing much with him and thirsting after him, when they cannot enjoy him : Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 'O Lord, thou art my God, early will I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' 'With all thy strength,' that is you are to glorify him and serve him with all the power and capacities that you have ; with body, time, estate, tongue, pleading for him, acting for him, not begrudging pains and labours, not serving him without cost.

3. A third thing is keeping covenant. The scriptures that speak of making covenant speak also of keeping covenant : Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies : ' and Ps. ciii. 17, 18, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.'

4. A thankful sense of the love of God in our reconciliation, glorying in grace, admiring of grace ; to preserve this is the great duty of a christian. This keepeth alive his love and obedience : 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : ' Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.'

SERMON XL.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.—2 Cor. v. 21.

HERE he amplifieth that mystery which was formerly briefly delivered concerning the way of our reconciliation on God's part—namely, 'that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them ; ' by showing what was done by God in Christ, and the benefit thence resulting to us. Here is *factum* and *finis facti*.

1. *Factum* ; and there take notice—

[1.] What Christ is in himself—*He knew no sin.*

[2.] What by the ordination of God—*He hath made him to be sin for us.*

2. *Finis facti* ; and there observe—

[1.] The benefit intended to us—*That we might be the righteousness of God.*

[2.] When we are made partakers of this benefit—*In him*, when actually united to Christ.

Let us explain these circumstances.

First, What was done in order to our reconciliation ; and there—

1. The innocence of Christ as mediator—'He knew no sin,' that is, practically and experimentally, but was an innocent, pure and sinless

person ; otherwise *theoretic* and *speculative*, he knew what sin was in its nature, and what it will be in its effects and fruits. The innocency of Christ is elsewhere asserted : John viii. 46, ‘Who convinceth me of sin?’ and 1 Peter ii. 22, ‘He did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth.’ Jesus Christ, our mediator, was free of the least transgression of the law of God, or any defect or inconformity thereunto, for he was completely obedient to the whole will of God both in heart and practice ; Mat. iii. 15, ‘For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.’ By his miraculous conception he was exempted from the contagion of original sin ; others are defiled with it : Job xiv. 4, ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No, not one.’ But Christ was exempted : Luke i. 31, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Jesus.’ And from all actual transgressions ; though the strongest of Satan’s fiery darts were shot at him, yet there was nothing to befriend a temptation : John xiv. 30, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.’ And it was needful our Redeemer should be so, that he might be lovely to God : Ps. xlv. 7, ‘Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness ; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows ;’ and to all the saints, Cant. v. 16, ‘His mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely.’ Christ’s innocency hath a double use. It serveth for satisfaction and for example. For satisfaction, that we might know that he did not endure these sufferings as a punishment of his own sin ; ‘he knew no sin,’ that is, with an experimental, approbative knowledge. To know signifieth in the Hebrew dialect, to love, to act, to like. He knew what it was to suffer for sin, but he knew not what it was to commit sin ; he suffered for sin, ‘the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,’ 1 Peter iii. 18. There was a necessity of his holiness, both as priest and sacrifice : Heb. vii. 26, 27, ‘Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.’ And as a sacrifice, that he might be completely lovely and acceptable to God, as being represented by all those spotless lambs, which as types of him were offered under the law : John i. 29, ‘Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world ;’ and, 1 Peter i. 19, ‘But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ In short our high priest must be without sin, and he must offer an unspotted sacrifice, that he may satisfy God’s justice, merit his favour, and enter heaven, and by his intercession procure the actual remission of sins and our full and everlasting salvation. So, for example, that he might be a perfect pattern of holiness to all his followers, that they may purify ‘themselves as Christ is pure,’ 1 John iii. 3. Not for example only I confess, for then Christ needed not to be made sin, that is, a sin-offering, or to bear the punishment of sin ; but yet for example, as well as expiation, ‘For we must be holy, as he that hath called us was holy,’ 1 Peter i. 15 ; and we are to walk as he walked, 1 John ii. 6. Head and members must be all of a piece, or else the mystical body of Christ would be monstrous and disproportionate.

Secondly, The second thing is the ordination of God—‘He hath

made him to be sin for us.' Two expressions must be explained, *sin* and *made*.

1. *Sin.* Mark; it is not said that God made Christ a sinner, but he hath made him sin; which I note to prevent bold and daring glosses, for wit will play the wanton with such expressions. Some have said that Christ was *maximus peccator*, because he stood in the room of all the rest; but this is harsh, and of an ill sound. Here is enough in the expression itself; we need not strain it higher. Sin is taken in scripture, sometimes for the punishment of sin, sometimes for a sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering. (1.) By a metonymy of the cause for the effect, sin is put for the punishment of sin, as Gen. iv. 13, 'My sin is greater than I can bear,' he meaneth *pæna peccuti*, the punishment. And ver. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door,' the punishment is at hand, and will certainly come on. So Heb. ix. 28, 'Christ will come without sin;' not only free from its blot, for so he was ever, holy, harmless, separate from sinners; but from its guilt and punishment, which he took upon him in our name. (2.) By a metonymy of the adjunct for the subject, sin is put for a sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin; *piaculum* in Latin is both a sin and a sacrifice for sin. So the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. iv. 8, that is, the sacrifices for sin, minding nothing but to glut themselves with the fat of the offerings, a part of which fell to the priests' portion; and so it must be understood here; he was made sin for us, that is, an expiatory sacrifice for our sin. So Paul applieth it in these two senses to Christ, Rom. viii. 3, 'God by sending his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, by sin hath condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by the sacrifice, abolished sin or the punishment, put an everlasting brand upon it to make it hateful to the saints.

2. The word *made* is to be explained; for here is no word but what is emphatical and hath its weight. That signifieth God's solemn ordination and appointment for to make is to ordain, as Mark iii. 14. *ἐποίησεν*, made or 'ordained twelve' disciples; and Acts ii. 36, 'Made to be Lord and Christ;' which is not referred to his nature and substance, but to his estate and condition; so God made him, that is, ordered him to bear the punishment of sin, or to become a sacrifice for sin. In other places it is said, Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' So Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him; he put him to grief.' The punishment and curse of sin was imposed upon him; so that our Saviour had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation, bearing the punishment of them himself.

Thirdly, The end of what was done about Christ. Where (1.) The benefit intended—'That we might be made the righteousness of God,' that is, that we might be just with that righteousness which God giveth, imputeth, and approveth. Mark here four things.

1. Righteousness is the word used, and it is here taken in a legal and judicial sense, not for a disposition of mind or heart, but for a state of acceptation, or the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God. So, also it is taken, Rom. v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,' that is, deemed and accounted so, accepted as such. In short, sanctification is not here intended, but justification. Now this

forensical or court righteousness may be interpreted either with relation to the precept or sanction.

[1.] With respect to the precept of the law; so it is said, Rom. ii. 13, 'For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.' A man that exactly fulfilleth the law of works is righteous, but so, 'by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight,' Rom. iii. 20. Let me instance in this kind of righteousness with respect to the law of grace, 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doth righteousness is righteous,' that is, evangelically, whilst he doth it sincerely, though not perfectly. The legal righteousness is opposite to *reatus culpæ*, to the fault; if that could be, we might say, he that fulfilleth the law is righteous, that is, he is not faulty.

[2.] There is a righteousness with respect to the sanction, and so with respect either to the commination or the promise. (1.) With respect to the commination—so legal righteousness is not dueness of punishment; he is righteous who is freed from the obligation to punishment. This righteousness is opposite to *reatus paenæ*; and so a man is said to be justified or made righteous, when he is freed from the eternal punishment threatened by God. And thus by the righteousness of Christ we are 'justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses,' Acts xiii. 39; or rather see that place, Rom. i. 17, 18, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' But before I go off in the commination, two things are considerable, sentence and execution. From the commination, as it importeth a sentence or respects a sentence; so we are justified, or made righteous, when we are not liable to condemnation, as Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation,' &c.; and Rom. v. 18, 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life.' But as the commination respects the execution, so to be justified or made righteous is not to be liable to punishment. So it is said, Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' Now this exemption is sometimes founded on the innocence of the person, but that is not our case; sometimes it cometh to pass through free pardon, as when the law is suspended, or penalty remitted by mere bounty, as Joseph forgave his brethren, or David, Absalom; but that is not our case neither; sometimes by satisfaction made, as Paul would pay Onesimus his debt; or by free pardon and satisfaction both together, which was certainly our case, 'For we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ,' Rom. iii. 24. There is free pardon and a full compensation made to divine justice, to satisfy for the breaches of the law. And so we are 'made the righteousness of God in him;' freely, and by God's grace finding out the remedy, and yet securing the authority of his law, and the honour of his justice, upon the account of Christ's satisfaction, or his being sin for us, that is, freed from the sentence and execution of the law, or the eternal wrath of God. (2.) The other part of the sanction is the promise. And so our judicial, or legal righteousness, is nothing else but our right to the reward, gift, or benefits founded, not in any merit of

our own, nor yet in the bare gift of another, but in the merit of another conjoined with his free gift. So by Christ's being made sin for us, we have not only freedom from the curse, but title to glory, 1 Thes. v. 9, 10. And our estate in heaven is called redemption: Eph. i. 14, 'Until the redemption of the purchased possession.' Christ's people are purchased by his blood, and are his possession, and his peculiar people; and they shall at length come to their full and final deliverance, which is there called redemption; as also, Eph. iv. 16, chiefly because it is a fruit of Christ's death, and something that accrueth to us by virtue of his laying down his soul as an offering for sin.

2. The abstract is used concerning our privileges, as well as concerning Christ's sufferings. He made sin, we made righteousness, not only accounted, or accepted as righteous; but made righteousness, which is more emphatical, and doth heighten our thoughts in the apprehension of the privilege, as Christ's being made sin doth in the greatness of his sufferings.

3. Observe, this is called the righteousness of God. Why?

[1.] Because it is the righteousness of that person who is God: Jer. xxiii. 6, 'The Lord our righteousness.' There is an essential righteousness, which Christ as God hath in common with the Father and the Spirit, and is incommunicable either as to men or angels, no more than God can communicate to his creatures any other of his essential attributes, omnipotency and eternity. But the righteousness of Christ, God-man, is conditional and surety righteousness, which he performed in our stead; his doing and suffering in our stead, this may be communicated to us, and is the ground of our acceptance with God, and may be called the righteousness of God, because the person that procured it is God.

[2.] It may be called the righteousness of God, because the only wise God found it out, and appointed it. It was not the device of man, but the result of his eternal counsels, Col. i. 19, 20. So when the apostle had proved that Jews and Gentiles were under a deep guilt, ὑπόδικος Θεῷ, Rom. iii. 19, liable to the challenges of the law, and the process of his revenging justice, and therefore needed a righteousness to render them acceptable to God. The light of nature, and the law of Moses, could give them no remedy, but rather rendered them more miserable, discovering sin, and affording them no help against it, but left them under uncertainty, bondage and horrors of conscience; what should the fallen creature do? The Lord in his mercy found out a righteousness, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference,' Rom. iii. 21, 22, &c.

[3.] Because it is accepted by God—a righteousness wherein God acquiesceth, and which he accepteth for our absolution, Mat. iii. 17. God is satisfied with Christ's obedience, as a perfect ransom for us, and is well pleased with those who make use of it and apply it in the appointed way by the subordinate new testament righteousness. Now, as it is the righteousness of God, it is a great comfort, for the righteousness of God is better than the righteousness of a mere creature. With the righteousness of God, we may appear before God, with all confidence, and look for all manner of blessings from him. The law which con-

demneth us is the law of God; the wrath and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God; the glory which we expect is the glory of God; the presence into which we come is the presence of God; and to suit with it, the righteousness upon which we stand is the righteousness of God, which is a great support to us.

4. Mark again, how the business is carried on by way of exchange; Christ made sin, and we righteousness. Christ is dealt with as the sinner in law, and we are pronounced as righteous before God; our surety is to bear our punishment, and is to be accepted as pleasing and acceptable to God; thus by a wonderful exchange he taketh our evil things upon himself, that he might bestow his good things upon us. He took from us misery, that he might convey to us mercy; he was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us by faith, Gal. iii. 13, 14; he suffered death that he might convey life; took our sin upon himself, that he might impart to us his righteousness. This exchange agreeth in this, that, on both sides, something not merited by the person himself is transferred upon them. What more averse from the holy nature of Christ than sin? ‘He knew no sin,’ and yet is made sin. What more alien and strange on our part than righteousness, who are so many ways culpable? yet we are made the righteousness of God in him. This is by no error of judgment, but the wise contrivance, ordination, and appointment of God, that by something done by another it should be imputed and esteemed to that other, as if done in his own person. So, for our sin was death imposed upon Christ, as if he had been the sinner; and for Christ’s righteousness, life and the heavenly inheritance is bestowed upon us, as if we had fulfilled the law, and satisfied it in our own person. But here is the difference, our sins are imputed to Christ out of God’s justice, he being our surety; his righteousness is imputed to us out of God’s mercy. Our sin was transferred upon him, that he might abolish it or take it away; for he came to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5. His righteousness was imputed to us, that it might continue as an everlasting ground of our acceptance with God, therefore he is said to ‘finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.’ The virtue of his righteousness is never spent, it abideth for ever. He was made a curse for us, that this curse might be dissolved and swallowed up, but his blessing is derived to us, that it may abide and continue with us to all eternity. He took our filthy rags, that he might throw them into the depth of the sea; but we have the garment of our elder brother, that we might put it on, and minister in it before the Lord, and find grace in his sight. Hence is it, that though we may be said truly to be righteous, and the children of God, yet Christ cannot be said to be a sinner or the child of wrath, because he had no sin of his own, and the wrath of God did not remain on him, but only pass over him.

Fourthly, There is but one thing remaining in the text—‘in him:’ *ἐν αὐτῷ*; and that noteth the time when, and the manner how, we are actually interested in this benefit. When we are in him we are by faith grafted into Christ before this righteousness is made ours upon this union. This righteousness is adjudged to us: 1 Cor. i. 30, ‘But of him, are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.’ First in him by a lively faith, then it

is imputed to us. And as we abide in his love by a constant obedience, so it is continued to us. This righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, Rom. i. 17; and it is by faith unto all and upon all that believe, Rom. iii. 22. So that we must look to this also, how we come to be possessed of it, as well as how it is brought about on Christ's part; as sin or sins could not be imputed to Christ, but by the common bond of the same nature, and unless he had been united to us by his voluntary suretyship and undertaking; so neither could the righteousness of Christ have been imputed to us, unless we had become one with him in the same mystical body; so that we believing in Christ and abiding in him, are made partakers of his righteousness, and so are pleasing and acceptable to God. The price was paid when Christ died; our actual possession and admission into the privilege is, when we are planted into Christ by a lively faith.

Doct. That Christ being made sin for us is the meritorious cause and way of our being the righteousness of God in him: Isa. liii. 11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' So that his bearing of our iniquities is the cause of our being accepted as righteous through faith in him. So Rom. v. 18, 19, 'Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' On this foundation hath the Lord established for the saints an unchangeable rule of justification.

I shall give you the sum of this point in these propositions.

1. The first covenant requireth of us perfect obedience upon pain of eternal death if we perform it not; for the tenor of it is, do and live, sin and die. The least sin according to that covenant merits eternal death: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'

2. All mankind have sinned, and so are liable to that death: Rom. iii. 23, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:' and, Rom. v. 12, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

3. Christ became the mediator, and stepped between us and the full execution of it, and took the penalties upon himself, and became a sacrifice to offended justice, and a ransom for the sinners. So that his sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of our sins. The two solemn notions of Christ's death are ransom and sacrifice: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all;' and Eph. v. 2, 'And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour;' and this ransom and sacrifice was paid with respect to the curse of the law, to free us from the penalty of the old covenant.

4. Upon this death, Christ hath acquired a new right of dominion and empire over the world, to be their lord and saviour, to rule them and save them upon his own terms: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be lord of dead and living;' so Phil. ii. 8-11, 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and

given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is lord, to the glory of God the Father.' God hath made this God-man the supreme prince of his church, and given him all power in heaven and earth, that all rational creatures should pay him all manner of subjection and acknowledgment, and his doctrine and faith be embraced by all nations in the world.

5. Our Redeemer, being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind, unto the grace and favour of God by offering, and granting them their free pardon, justification, adoption, and right to glory, to all that will sincerely repent and believe in him ; but sentencing them anew to death, that will not. That this is the sum of the gospel appeareth in many places of scripture : Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned ;' and John iii. 16-19, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world : but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,' &c.

6. This repenting and believing is such a hearty assent to the truth of the gospel as causeth us thankfully, and broken-heartedly and fiducially, to accept the Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give up ourselves to God by him. An assent to the truth of the gospel there must be, for the general faith goeth before the particular ; a belief of the gospel before our commerce with Christ. This assent must produce acceptance, because the gospel is an offer of a blessedness suitable to our necessities and desires, and our great work is receiving Christ : John i. 12, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' A broken-hearted acceptance it is, because Christ and his benefits are a free gift to us, and we come to accept this grace as condemned sinners, with confession of our undeservings and ill deservings ; with confession that eternal wrath might justly be our portion. For God lets none go out of the first covenant till they have subscribed to the justice of it, felt sin, and know what is the smart of it. And then a thankful acceptance it is. For so great a benefit as pardon and life should not be entertained but with a grateful consent, and a deep sense of his love who doth so freely save us. Surely Christ cannot, should not, be received into the heart without a hearty welcome and cordial embracings. And it is a fiducial consent, such as is joined with some confidence ; for there is confidence or trust in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from it ; and without it we are not satisfied with the truth of the offer, nor can depend upon God's word, Eph. i. 13. And this is joined with a giving up ourselves to him, or to God by him ; for he is our sovereign and lord as well as our saviour ; Col. ii. 6 ; Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince, and saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins :' 2 Peter iii. 2, 'The apostles of our Lord and Saviour,'

and we must be contented to be conducted to the unseen glory in his own way. Besides, in this remedying law of grace, he cometh to us as the physician of our souls, and we must own him as such, and rest upon his skill, and suffer him to apply his sharpest plasters, and take his bitterest medicines, which are most ungrateful to flesh and blood. Lastly, it is a return to God to enjoy, please, and glorify him, which is our main business, and therefore we must yield up ourselves to the Lord with a hearty consent of subjection, to be guided, ruled, and ordered by him.

7. All those that repent and believe have remission and justification, by Christ's satisfaction and merit given to them; so that they are become acceptable and pleasing unto God. 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x. 4. And God having by a sin-offering condemned sin in the flesh, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, that is, such a righteousness as satisfieth the law, so that we shall be able to stand in the judgment, without which we could not: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' But why? Upon a twofold account; you have a righteousness to plead, to exempt you from the penalties of the law; and you have the conditions of the new covenant to plead, to entitle you to the privileges of the gospel,—Christ's merits and satisfaction as a sinner impleaded, and faith and repentance as the condition.

Use 1. Let us propound this to our faith, 'That Christ was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.' It was agreed between the Father and the Son, that if he would be sin, or a sacrifice for sin, we should be made free from sin and death, and live by him. See Isa. liii. 10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' By this one offering Christ hath restored as much honour to God as our sin took from him; and therefore now, justice being satisfied, grace hath a free course. Therefore this should comfort us against the guilt of sin; Christ's sacrifice is sufficiently expiatory; Christ hath suffered those punishments which are due to us, that which is equivalent to what we should have suffered. He hath suffered all kinds of punishment. In his body, 1 Peter ii. 24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.' In his soul, in his agonies; 'His soul was heavy to death,' Mat. xxvi. 38. As a little before the shower falls, there is a gloominess and blackness, so in Christ's spirit, he suffered privative evils, or *pæna damni*, in his desertion; positive evils, or *pæna sensus*, when he sent forth 'tears and strong cries unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,' Heb. v. 7, 8. He hath suffered from all by whom evil could be inflicted—men, Jews and Gentiles; strangers and his own disciples; the powers of darkness, who were the authors of all those evils which Christ suffered from their instruments, Luke xxii. 53. He suffered from God himself, the full cup of whose wrath he drunk off. Such a

broad foundation hath God laid for our peace. He suffered in every part, sorrows being poured in upon him by the conduit of every sense, hunger, thirst, nakedness, spittings, stripes; they pierced his hands and feet.

2. Propound it to your love.

[1.] How much we are bound to acknowledge the unspeakable mercy of God, who, knowing our sad condition, pitied us, and resolved to save us, and to reconcile us to himself, by such a priest and sacrifice as was convenient for us. But we, unworthy wretches, being ignorant and senseless of our sin, guilt, and misery, do not understand what need we have of Christ, nor praise God for his great love in providing him for us. Our condition was sinful, and so miserable. We are guilty, polluted with sin, and liable to death, can have no access to God, nor eternal life; and, which is worst of all, are senseless of this sad condition; and if we once know it, we are hopeless, helpless, and so should have perished utterly, if the Lord had not found out a remedy and a ransom for us, Rom. viii. 32.

[2.] How miserable would it have been, if every man should bear his own burden; how light soever any sins seem, when they are committed, yet they will not be found light, when they come to reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt. If God had laid sins upon us, as he laid them all upon Christ, they would have sunk us all to hell. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other sorrow, if God give but a touch of it: Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.' The rod, if it be dipped in guilt, smarts sorely. If a spark of his wrath light into your consciences, what a combustion doth it make there! Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head, they are a burden too heavy for me.' As soon as we do but taste of this cup, we cry out presently, My heart faileth. You may know what it is, partly, by what Christ felt. He lost his wonted comforts, he was put into strange agonies and a bloody sweat. Now if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If his soul were exceeding sad, how soon shall we be dismayed? Partly, in the saints; when they feel the weight of God's little finger, all life and power is gone, if God set home but one sin upon the conscience: Ps. xl. 12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, therefore my heart faileth.' Job saith, 'The arrows of the Lord like poison did drink up his spirit,' Job. vi. 4. Partly, by your own experience. When the conscience of sin is a little revived in you, what horrors and disquiets do you feel in yourselves! Prov. xviii. 15, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Then thousands of rams, and rivers of oil, anything for the sin of the soul. Partly, by the state of the reprobate in the world to come, and what the threatenings of the word say concerning those who die in their sins: Heb. x. 31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' and Mark ix. 44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.' This is the portion of them that bear their own burden, and their own transgression.

[3.] The happiness which redoundeth to us by Christ's bearing it

for us. It is not a thing inconsiderable, or a matter of lesser moment to be made ‘the righteousness of God in him.’ Our whole welfare and happiness dependeth upon it, our freedom from the curse, our title to glory.

(1) Freedom from the curse; for this is such a righteousness as giveth us exemption from the penalty threatened in the law. We have the comfort of it for the present, a freedom from the sentence of condemnation : Rom. viii. 1, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,’ &c ; so that we may go cheerfully about our service. But much more shall we have the comfort of it when the great God of recompenses cometh to execute the threatening. In the general judgment there is no appearing before God in that great day with safety and comfort, without some righteousness of one sort or another, our own or our surety’s. Now no righteousness of ours can secure us from the dint of God’s anger, and the just strokes of the law-covenant. Blessed are they that are found in Christ, not having their own righteousness.

(2.) Our title to glory, as it qualifieth us for the reward. There is no getting the blessing but in the garments of our elder brother. We have holiness given us upon the account of this righteousness, 1 Peter ii. 24 ; we are sanctified, made personally holy and righteous. We have faith given us by virtue of this righteousness, 2 Peter i. 1. All progress in grace is given us by virtue of the everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20, 21 ; and at length glory : Eph. v. 27, ‘That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.’

3. Let us prize it and desire it, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Every man is prone to set up a righteousness of his own, Luke xviii. 9. Partly, because naturally the law is written upon our hearts ; and therefore moral strains are more welcome than evangelical doctrine. Every man is born under a covenant of works. Partly, out of pride. Every man would be *αὐτεξούσιος*, all for personal merit. A russet coat of our own is valued more than a silken one that is borrowed : Rom. x. 3, ‘For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.’ But these do not consider the strictness of the law-covenant, nor the purity of God, nor themselves, or their own defects. A broken-hearted sense of sin would make us prize Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 4, ‘I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.’

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SERMONS

UPON THE

ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF HEBREWS.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the High and Mighty Prince WILLIAM, By the Grace of God,
King of England, France and Ireland, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—

THIS relict of the worthy deceased author was long since intended, when you were at a greater distance, to be sent abroad under the patronage of your great name. His own name indeed hath long been, and still continues, so bright and fragrant in England that your Majesty's condescending goodness will count it no indignity to yours to impart some of its more diffused beams and odours to it. However, if what there was of presumption in that first intention can be pardoned, no reason can be apprehended of altering it upon your nearer and most happy approach unto us.

The kind design and blessed effect whereof, compared with the scope and design of this excellent work, do much the more urgently invite to it; for as you come to us with the compassionate design of a deliverer, and the wonderful blessing of heaven hath rendered you also a victor and a successful deliverer, the design of this book is to represent that faith which is the peculiar and most appropriate principle of what is (like your own) the most glorious of all victories. You have overcome, not by the power of your arms, but by the sound of your name, and by your goodness and kindness, which so effectually first conquered minds as to leave you no opportunity of using the other more harsh and rugged means of conquest. Yea, and your success is owing to a greater name than yours; our case, and the truth of the thing, allow and oblige us in a low and humble subordination to apply those sacred words, 'Blessed is he that cometh to us in the name of the Lord,' the power of which glorious name is wont to be exerted according as a trust is placed in it. We acknowledge and adore a most conspicuous divine presence with you in this undertaking of yours, which is not otherwise to be engaged than by that faith of which the apostle and this author do here treat. This faith, we are elsewhere told, overcomes this world; and are told here in what way—by representing another, with the invisible Lord of both worlds, being the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not, and whereby we see him who is invisible. This world is not otherwise to be conquered than as it is an enemy; it is an enemy by the vanities, lusts, and impurities of it. That faith which foresees the end of this world, which beholds it as a vanishing thing, passing away with all the lusts of it,—which looks through all time, and contemplates all the affairs and events of this temporary state as under the conduct and management of an all-wise and almighty invisible Ruler,—which penetrates into eternity, and discovers another world and state of things which shall be unchangeable and of everlasting permanency, and there-

in beholds the same invisible glorious Lord, as a most gracious and bountiful rewarder of such as serve and obey him with sincere fidelity in this state of trial and temptation here on earth,—such a faith cannot but be victorious over all the lusts, vanities, impurities, and sensualities of this present evil world. Such a faith, working by love to God and good men, and all mankind, and being thereupon fruitful in the good works of piety, sobriety, righteousness and charity, will be the great reformer of the world, conquer its malignity, reduce its disorders, and infer a universal harmony and peace.

Even among us the noblest part of your Majesty's conquest is yet behind. It cannot but have been observed, that for many years by-past a design hath been industriously driven that we might be made papists, to make us slaves; and for the enslaving us, to debauch us, and plunge us into all manner of sensuality, from a true apprehension, that brute and slave are nearest akin, and that there is a sort of men so vile and abject (as the ingenious expression of a great man among the Romans once was) *quos non decet esse nisi servos*—to whom liberty were an indecency, and who should be treated unbecomingly if they were not made slaves, that we should be fit to serve the lusts and humours of any other man, when once we were become servile to our own. And next, that the religion might easily be wrested away from us which was become so weak and impotent as not to be able to govern us; and that if humanity were eradicated, the principles and privileges that belong to our nature torn from us, easy work would be made with our christianity and religion. What hath been effected among us by so laboured a design, through a long tract of time, is before you as the matter of your remaining victory, which, as on our part, will be the more difficult, where the pernicious humour is inveterate. So your majesty's part herein will be most easy, your great example being, under the supreme power, the mover, the potent engine which is to effect the hoped redress, and your more principal contribution herunto consisting but in being yourself, in expressing the virtue, prudence, goodness, and piety, which God hath wrought into your temper. The design of saying this is not flattery, but excitation. Give me leave to lay before your Majesty somewhat that occurs in a book written twenty-seven years ago, not by way of prophecy, but probable conjecture of the way wherein a blessed state of things in these parts of the world is likely to be brought about:—

'God will stir up some happy king or governor, in some country of Christendom, endued with wisdom and consideration, who shall discern the true nature of godliness and christianity, and the necessity and excellency of serious religion, and shall place his honour and felicity in pleasing God and doing good, and attaining everlasting happiness, and shall subject all worldly respects unto these high and glorious ends; shall know that godliness and justice have the most precious name on earth, and prepare for the most glorious reward in heaven,' &c.

With how great hopes and joy must it fill every upright heart daily (as they do) to behold in your Majesty and in your Royal Consort, (whom a divine hand hath so happily placed with you on the same throne) the same lively characters of this exemplified idea! It cannot but inspire us with such pleasant thoughts that winter is well-nigh

gone, and the time of singing of birds approaches ; the night is far spent and the day is at hand,—a bright and glorious morning triumphs over the darkness of a foul, tempestuous night. The sober, serious age now commences, when sensuality, falsehood, cruelty, oppression, the contempt of God and religion are going out of fashion ; to be a noted debauchee of a vicious life and dishonest mind, capable of being swayed to serve ill purposes without hesitation, will no longer be thought a man's praise, or a qualification for trusts. It shall be no disreputable thing to profess the fear of God and the belief of a life to come. A scenical, unserious religion, a spurious, adulterated christianity, made up of doctrines repugnant to the sacred oracles, to sound reason, and even to common sense, with idolatrous and ludicrous formalities, and which hates the light, shall vanish before it. There shall be no more strife about unnecessary circumstances ; grave decencies in the worship of God that shall be self-recommending, and command a veneration in every conscience, shall take place. There shall be no contention amongst christians ; but who shall most honour God and our Redeemer, do most good in the world, and most entirely love and effectually befriend and serve one another, which are all things most connatural to that vivid realising, victorious faith here treated of.

Nor are other victories alien to it, over the armed powers of God's visible enemies in the world, such as he may yet call your Majesty with glorious success to encounter in his name, and for the sake of it. In some following verses of this chapter (wherein the line of the apostle's discourse went beyond that of this worthy author's life) this is represented as the powerful instrument which those great heroes employed in their high achievements of subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, or executing God's just revenges upon his unyielding enemies, obtaining promises, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence of fire, escaping the edge of the sword, whereby out of weakness they were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. By this faith they (in the prophet's lofty style, Isa. xxxiv. 5), as it were, bathed their sword in heaven, gave it a celestial tincture, made it resistless and penetrating. This is the true way, wherein, according to the divinest philosophy, the spirit of a man may draw into consent with itself the universal almighty Spirit. And if the glorious Lord of Hosts shall assign to your Majesty a further part in the employments of this noble kind, may he gird you with might unto the battle ; may your bow abide in strength, and the arms of your hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, even by the God of your fathers, who shall help you, and by the Almighty who shall bless you ; and may he most abundantly bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. May he cover your head in fight, and crown it with victory and glory, and grant you to know, by use and trial, the power of that faith, in all its operations, which unites God with man, and can render, in a true and sober sense, and to all his own purposes, an human arm omnipotent. Which is the serious prayer of

Your Majesty's most devoted and most humble servant and subject,
JOHN HOWE.

TO THE READER.

THOU art here presented with a third volume of the works of the late reverend and learned Dr Thomas Manton, whose great name is sufficient to recommend it to thy perusal, when thou art assured it is his own. These sermons and treatises were either written from his own notes, or carefully compared *verbatim* with them, and amended by them ; and whosoever were acquainted with the spirit and preaching of the author will find he hath no cause to suspect being imposed on herein. His copious invention, clear and succinct opening of gospel mysteries, close application to the conscience, with that admirable variety of handling the same subject which sometimes occurs, are scarce imitable by any. It were needless to add anything to the testimonies that have been given him by those who have published his former works.

What the author's opinion about publishing posthumous works was may justify what of this kind hath been already done and is now tendered to thee, which I shall give you in his own words in his epistle before Dr Sibb's 'Comment on the 1st. Chapter of the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians :'—‘Let it not stumble thee that the work is posthumous, and cometh out so long after the author's death ; it were to be wished that those that excel in public gifts would during life publish their own labours, to prevent spurious obtrusions upon the world, and give them their last hand and polishment ; as the apostle Peter was careful to write before his decease, 2 Peter i. 12–14 ; but usually the church's treasure is most increased by legacies. As Elijah let fall his mantle when he was taken up into heaven ; so God's eminent servants, when their persons could no longer remain in the world, have left behind them some worthy pieces as a monument of their graces and zeal for the public welfare, whether it be out of a modest sense of their own endeavours, as being loath upon choice, or of their own accord, to venture abroad into the world, or whether it be that being occupied and taken up with other labours, or whether it be in a conformity to Christ, who would not leave his Spirit till his departure, or whether it be out of a hope that their works would find a more kindly reception after their death, the living being more liable to envy and reproach ; but when the author is in heaven, the work is more esteemed upon earth. Whether for this or that cause, usually it is that not only the life, but the death, of God's servants hath been profitable to his church, by that means many useful treatises being freed from that privacy and obscurity to which by the modesty of the author they were formerly confined.’

To all this may be added that not many days before the author
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departed this life he declared his intentions of publishing something himself but his sudden death prevented him.

And let none wonder that in the author's so constant course of preaching the same matter may sometimes recur. In some places thou wilt find notes of reference; in others the same matter is handled with such variety as to prevent tediousness, in which the author had a singular excellency. However, repetitions of the same truths have their use. 'To write the same things to you,' saith the apostle, 'to me is not grievous, for you it is safe,' Phil. iii. 1. Our knowledge is imperfect, and needs a continual increase; our memories are slippery and frail, and need to be refreshed; our attention is dull, and many truths slip by us at the first hearing without regard; our hearts are backward to our duty, and we need frequently to be excited. We more blame a dull horse than the rider, who frequently quickens him with a spur. It savours too much of pride of knowledge, and a curious itch of novelty, when we cannot endure to hear more than once of the same truths; and such a humour is not to be gratified, but mortified.¹ But though some may quarrel, I doubt not but the serious christian will receive benefit by what is here offered, which, that it may be thy lot, is the earnest prayer of

Thy affectionate servant in the work of the gospel,

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

¹ See the Author's Twenty-fifth Sermon on John xvii.

SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.

SERMON I.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. HEB. xi. 1.

IN the close of the former chapter the apostle had spoken of living by faith, and thereupon taketh occasion to show what faith is. He that would live by faith had need search out the nature of it; an unknown instrument is of little use. It is true, a man may act faith that cannot describe it artificially, as an infant may live, that doth not know what life is; but however, it is more comfortable when our thoughts are distinct, explicit, and clear, concerning the nature of those graces that are so necessary for us, and the christian life is much more orderly, and less at random and peradventure. And therefore the apostle, to teach them this holy art of exercising faith, and living by faith to more advantage, he gives them here an excellent description of it, ‘Now faith is the substance,’ &c.

In the words there is the thing described, and the description itself. The thing described is Faith; the description is this, ‘It is the substance of things hoped for,’ &c. The description is proper, according to the rules of art, *Habitus distinguuntur per actus, et actus per propria objecta*, habits are described by their formal acts, and acts restrained to their proper objects; so faith is here described by its primary and formal acts, which are referred to their distinct objects. The acts of faith are two; it is the substance, it is the evidence. Think it not strange that I call them acts, for that is it the apostle intends, therefore Beza says, in rendering this place, he had rather paraphrase the text, than obscure the scope; and he interpreteth it thus—Faith substantiates or gives a subsistence to our hopes, and demonstrates things not seen. There is a great deal of difference between the acts of faith, and the effects of faith. The effects of faith are reckoned up throughout this chapter; the formal acts of faith are in this verse. These acts are suited with their objects. As the matters of belief are yet to come, faith gives them a substance, a being, as they are hidden from the eyes of sense and carnal reason; so faith gives them an evidence, and doth convince men of the worth of them; so that one of these acts belongs to the understanding, the other to the will. By the one faith is a convincing demonstration, and by the other a practical application. By the one act it turns hope into some kind of present fruition and by the

other things altogether invisible are represented to the soul with clearness and certainty. In short, by faith things hoped for have a being ; things not seen have an evidence.

I shall discuss the parts of the text as they lie in order.

First, I begin with the first act and object, ‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for.’

1. Let me open the phrases. *Faith* is sometimes taken for the doctrine of faith, and sometimes for the grace of faith. Some take liberty to expound it of the former, the doctrine of faith, that is, the substance of things hoped for. I confess the words agree well, but not the scope ; the doctrine of faith, *Fides quæ creditur*, is the substance of things hoped for ; the word and faith do come under one description. But the apostle’s drift here is to show, not what we do believe, but how we live by faith ; therefore the grace is here understood, not the doctrine. Now the grace of faith is considered here, not as it justifies but rather as it sanctifies, as it is an instrument in the spiritual life. He speaketh of those acts which faith discovereth most in its use and exercise to baffle temptations, and to make us stand our ground under sore assaults, troubles, and persecutions.

Now this faith is the ‘substance,’ *ὑπόστασις* ; that is, the word. Some difference there is about the rendering of it ; the most usual significations of it are confidence and substance. Sometimes it is put for confidence, and for a firm and resolved expectation ; as Heb. iii. 14, ‘We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm, or steadfast unto the end,’ *ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως*, it is the same word ; but there we render it confidence ; and it seems to be parallel with ver. 6, ‘If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.’ So 2 Cor. ix. 4, ‘In this confident boasting,’ *ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ τῆς καυχήσεως*, it is the same word. And thus the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word, which they render sometimes by *spes*, sometimes by *hypostasis* ; and so in profane authors, Plutarch calls those that stand out after the field is won, *ὑφίσταμένους*, because of their great confidence. Polybius calleth the valorous resistance of Horatius Cocles, *ὑπόστασιν*, which use of the word is proper to the original of it, *ὑφίστασθαι, firmiter stare*.

2. The second explication is the *substance*. The word signifies substance or subsistence ; because confident expectation gives our hopes a kind of present or actual being, and apprehends things to come as present and subsisting, and causes them to work, as if they were already enjoyed ; therefore our translators, fitly I conceive, render it here substance, saith the Greek scholist, *τὰ ἐν ἔλπισιν, &c.* Though things in hope are absent and to come, yet in the certain firm expectation and persuasion of the believer, they are present and real ; so that the meaning is, faith doth not only look out with cold thoughts about things to come, but causes them to work as if they had already a being, and the believer were in the possession and enjoyment of them. And in this sense it is the substance of things hoped for ; it gives them a being, while it beholds them in their original fountain, which is the word of promise ; and while it unites and joins the soul to them by earnest hope, which is as it were an anticipation of our blessedness, and a pre-occupation of the joys of the world to come, faith causeth

such a subsistence and fiducial presence of the things hoped for in the mind of a believer, as that he concludes not only that they may be, or shall be, but that they already are. Faith is the substance, and that 'of things hoped for ;' so he calls all the blessings of the covenant which are not yet enjoyed. Many things indeed were hoped for by the patriarchs, and believers of the old testament, which are now past, which are matters of mere belief, and not of hope to us, and so come under the latter description of faith, the evidence of things not seen, as the incarnation of Christ: yet their faith made those things present to them : John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.' Abraham saw that day, and had a distinct view of it, though they were to them things hoped for ; yet we believe them, though we do not see them. But there are other things which are only promised by God, and not yet enjoyed, that are simple matters of hope—as the general resurrection, the happiness of the glorified estate. Now faith doth as it were give a real being to them as if they were present. But then there are other things that may be enjoyed in this world, though not for the present, yet in some season ; as the gracious presence of God, and his favourable returns after absence, and some estrangement, and deep affliction ; these things may also be comprised in this expression, being things we hope for according to promise, and though they be absent, faith gives them a being and presence. You will find faith to be a kind of prophetic grace ; for to faith, when God is absent, yet then he is present ; when he hides his face, faith can look behind the veil, and there see fatherly love, and a God of mercy. And in scripture upon this account the children of God answer themselves, and antedate their praises. When they ask anything of God in prayer, faith asks and answers itself ; it makes the help and mercy present which we ask according to God's will : Ps. vi. 4, 'Return, O Lord, deliver my soul ;' then he answers himself, ver. 8, 9, 'The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping ; the Lord hath heard my supplication.' But chiefly the expression reflects upon and is meant of those blessings which are only in expectation, and never in actual and complete enjoyment in this world, as heaven and the glory of the everlasting state ; faith gives a being and real subsistence in the soul to the glory that is yet to be revealed.

Obj. I have done with the exposition, only here is a doubt ; does not this confound faith and hope, to make things hoped for to be the object of faith, for graces differ in their objects ?

Sol. I answer, There is a link between the graces, but no confusion ; they are akin, but not confounded one with another. Blessedness to come is an object of faith, and an object of hope ; it is an object of faith as it is present in the promises, or present in our hearts ; and an object of hope in regard of its futurity, as it is yet to come. Faith is the ground of hope. Faith believeth, and hope expecteth. Faith first closeth with *verbum Dei*, the word of God, that assures us of such a blessedness ; then hope is carried out towards *rem verbi*, the thing promised. Faith makes all things certain, and in a sort already present ; but hope looks out for a full accomplishment. Faith gives us a right, and persuades us of the truth of things promised, and hope looks after the manifestation of them in possession. Faith is the hand, and

hope is the eye of the soul. Faith lays hold upon the promise, and hope looks out after the things promised. Faith awakens hope, and hope cherishes faith, bringing in constant support to it.

Out of this first clause let me observe—

Doct. That a lively faith doth give such a reality, certainty, and present being to things hoped for and yet to come, as if they were already actually enjoyed.

And thus it is said of Abraham, John viii. 56, that ‘he saw Christ’s day.’ Though there were many successions of ages between Christ and Abraham, yet faith made it present, represented it as if it were before his eyes; ‘he saw my day,’ not by a naked supposition but by real prospect, such as wrought upon his heart, and ‘he was glad,’ and leaped for joy. And so in this sense a believer is said to have eternal life, John iii. 36. He is not only sure of it when he dies, but hath it here in some sense: Heb. xi. 13, ‘These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.’ Without faith we cannot see things at a distance. Here I shall show—

1. How faith doth this.

2. The benefit and advantage of this property of faith in the whole business of the spiritual life, how this is the great ground of our living by faith.

First. How does faith give a subsistence or present being to things hoped for? How can we be said to have that happiness which we do but expect?

I answer: Faith takes possession four ways—(1.) *Spe*, by hope. (2.) *Promissis*, in the promises. (3.) *Capite*, in our head. (4.) *Primitiis*, in the first-fruits.

1. *Spe.* By a lively hope it doth as it were sip of the cup of blessing, and preoccupy and foretaste those eternal and excellent delights which God hath prepared for us, and affects the heart with the certain expectation of them, as if they were enjoyed. It appears by the effect of this hope, which is rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8. Joy is proper to fruition and enjoyment. We delight in a thing when we have it, and we delight in a thing when we hope for it; for a christian’s hope being built upon certain and unerring grounds, it causeth the same effect also. Natural hope is the flower of pleasure and foretaste of happiness; so spiritual hope is the harbinger and forerunner of those eternal and unmixed delights which the Lord hath prepared for us. Hope must needs make things present; for mark, it is more than supposition and conceit. Heaven in the thoughts differs very much from heaven in our hope, as much as taste doth from sight, or longing from looking. Hope causeth rejoicing—an affection proper to present possession. Where it is anything strong, it diverts the mind from present wants and miseries and comforts us, and doth us good with the evidence of a future blessed estate reserved for us in the heavens. Hope is not a presumptuous conceit, like the supposition of a beggar imagining himself to be a king, and how much power and glory it will bring to him when he is arrived to it; but like the expectation of a prince who is the undoubted heir of a crown, and knows that one day he shall possess it. There is not only a naked supposal, but a real certainty and expectation; therefore it must needs cause

some present joy. Bare contemplation works a kind of union. There is a union between the thoughts and the object, as there is between the star and the eye; it is present in my eye, though the star be a thousand miles distant: so there is a kind of union between the thought and the thing thought of; but much more a union between hope and the thing hoped for: for the soul doth as it were sally out by desire, and the effect of hope is far more real than the effects of naked and fond imagination. It filleth the soul with lively comfort: 'Rejoice in hope,' saith the apostle, Rom. xii. 12. Joy or delight is the effect of fruition or present enjoyment, yet delight is given to hope; for delighting is the complacency of the soul in a thing obtained; now hope, where it is strong, gives us a sweet contentment and joy from the evidence of a future blessed estate: Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end;' and Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Hope, by a mystery, and spiritual kind of magic, fetcheth heaven from heaven, and makes it exist in the heart of a believer. It doth not only, like the spies, bring us tidings, and a glorious report of that heaven, but makes heaven to stoop and earth to ascend, and brings the believer into the company of the blessed, and brings down the joys of the Spirit into the heart of a believer. We cannot hope for anything, but we must in part possess the thing hoped for; much more in spiritual things. Faith doth not only unite you to Christ, but puts Christ and heaven into the soul by hope. There is the Lamb, the white throne, the glorified spirits, the upper paradise, and the tree of life in the soul, made really present to us by faith through a lively and watchful hope.

2. Faith takes possession, and gives a being to the things hoped for—*promissis*, in the promises. There is not only the union of hope, but a clear right and title; God hath passed over all those things to us in the covenant of grace. When we take hold of the promises, we take hold of the blessing promised by the root of it, until it flows up to full satisfaction. Hence those expressions, believers are said 'to lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12-19, by which their right is secured to them; 'And he that heareth my words, and believeth in me, hath eternal life,' John v. 24. Christ doth not only say, He shall have eternal life, but, *jus habet*, he hath a clear right and title to it, which is as sure as sense, though not as sweet. Faith gives us heaven, because in the promise it gives us a title to heaven; we are sure to have that to which we have a title; a right is enough, though there be not always an actual feeling; he hath a grant, God's word to assure him of it. He is said to have an estate that hath the conveyance of it, but it is not necessary he should carry his land upon his back. The fee of heaven is made over to us in law though not in deed; it is ours before we possess it, because God hath passed his word that we shall have it. And we hold it by covenant right, though we have it not by actual possession. It is not only prepared for us in the designation of God, but given in respect of the indefeasableness of our right and property: Luke xxii. 29, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom.' Now faith receives the kingdom. We take hold of the thing promised by the root of it, and then we are sure of it; the promise is not a dry root, and the hand of faith is not a barren soil; but when once the hand of

faith takes hold of the promise, your interest will grow up into stalk and bud, and flower, and bring forth the fruit of full contentment. Now this contents a believer for the present, because faith considers what the promises are, and whose they are.

[1.] What are the promises?

(1.) Partly thus: They are the eruptions and overflows of God's grace and love. God's heart is so big with love to the saints that he cannot stay till the accomplishment of things, but he must acquaint us beforehand what he means to do for us: 'Before they spring forth,' saith God, 'I tell you of them,' Isa. xlii. 9. God's purposes of grace are like a sealed fountain, but his promises like a fountain broken open; before his purposes be brought to pass, he will tell us of them. The Lord might have done us good, and given us never a promise; but love concealed would not have been so much for our comfort. Now faith, seeing the testimony of God's love, counts itself bound to rest on the promise, and doth in effect say to the soul, as Naomi to Ruth, 'Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing,' Ruth iii. 18. So faith saith to the soul, Sit still, until thou know how the matter will be; for God will not be at rest till he hath accomplished all that he hath spoken to thee. God accounts our purposes to be obedience, because they are the first issues of our love: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I will confess my sin unto the Lord, and thou forgavest mine iniquity;' and Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham offered Isaac,' because he did it in vow and purpose; much more should we accept promises which are the declarations of God's purposes as performances: it will in time come to pass.

(2.) Faith looks upon them as the rule and warrant of our certainty. They show how far God is to be trusted, even so far as he is engaged; *promittendo se facit debitorem*, God hath entered into bonds, and made himself a debtor to his creatures by his promises. The purposes of God are unchangeable; but now when his purposes are declared in his promises, you have a further holdfast upon him. God will try our faith, and see what credit he hath with men, whether they will depend upon him when there is security put into our hands. Well then, faith takes hold of the blessing, the promise; why? God hath passed his word, the word is gone out of his lips, and he cannot in honour recall it, Ps. lxxxix. 34; we may challenge him by his promise. Saith Austin of his mother, 'Lord, she was wont to throw thee in thy hand-writing; ' she was wont to plead promises. God hath entered into bonds, and you may come and plead, and put those bonds in suit: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' An usurer thinks himself rich, though he hath little money in the house, because he hath bonds and good security. He that hath a thousand pounds in good security is in a better case than he that hath only a hundred pounds in ready money. A christian accounts God's promises to be his estate and patrimony, to be his substance and inheritance.

(3.) The promise is a pawn of the thing promised, and must be kept till performance comes. God's truth and holiness are left at pledge with the creature, and he will set them free; his honour lies at

stake, and you may tell him of it: ‘Lord, for thy mercy and truth’s sake,’ Ps. cxv. 1. God is interested to vindicate his name from calumny and reproach. Well then, faith, looking upon the promises as the eruptions of God’s love, flowing from God’s eternal love, as so many bonds and holdfasts upon God, and looking upon them as a pawn left us till the blessing come, upon all these advantages it serves instead of fruition; it entertains things to come with like certainty as if they were accomplished.

[2.] Faith considers whose the promises are; they are God’s, who is faithful and able. The faithful and almighty God, he cannot say and unsay. We have it under assurance enough if we have it under his word. There is both Sarah’s and Abraham’s faith commended to us in scripture; Sarah’s, ‘because she judged him faithful who had promised,’ Heb. xi. 11. That God who cannot lie, that God who hath been ever tender of his word, that God who will destroy heaven and earth rather than one iota of his word shall pass away, he hath left us promises, and is not this as good as payment? Then faith looks upon God’s almighty ness. This was Abraham’s faith: Rom. iv. 21, ‘Being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was also able to perform.’ It is a difficult thing to see how we shall be secured from so many temporal dangers, and brought safe to eternal happiness. Aye, but God is able, and we have his word; his saying is doing; ‘God spake the word, and it was done,’ Ps. xxxiii. 9. What can let the all-sufficient God? His promises are performances.

3. We have it *in capite*, in our head. That is a christian’s tenure; he holds all in his head by Christ. Though he be not glorified in his own person, he is glorified in his head, in Jesus Christ. When Christ was glorified, we were glorified; he seized upon heaven in our right: John xiv. 2, ‘I go to prepare a place for you.’ Christ is gone to heaven in our name, to possess it in our stead; therefore a believer is assured he shall share therein. Therefore as Christ’s glorification is past, so in a sense a believer’s glorification is past; the head cannot rise, and ascend, and be glorified without the members: Eph. ii. 6, ‘And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.’ The apostle speaks of it as a thing past. He doth not say, We shall rise, shall sit down with him; but we are risen, and are ascended, and are sat down with him in heavenly places. In the right, and by virtue of the head, all of us are already glorified—an expression which implies greater certainty than a single prediction and promise; and all this that our comfort might be more abounding, and our courage more strong against dangers, death, difficulties, and all that may befall us in the way to heaven. Look, as we say of an old decrepit man, such an one hath one foot in the grave, a believer hath more than one foot in heaven; his head is there; we have taken possession of it in Christ, or rather he hath taken possession of it in our name; and as soon as we are united to Christ we are interested in this comfort, even whilst we lie groaning under pressures and miseries. Nothing but faith can unriddle this mystery, that a believer should be on earth, and yet in heaven; converse with sinners, and yet be in the company of glorified saints; or humbled with the pressures and inconveniences of the present state, yet be ascended and sit down with Christ in heavenly places. Faith gives you an actual

right and investiture in regard of your head. As soon as we are sanctified we are in a manner glorified also, and have not only a title and right in ourselves, but an actual possession in our head. As the head is crowned to reflect a glory and honour upon the whole body, so Jesus Christ is crowned, and we are glorified with him ; and this makes the right more strong ; for nothing on earth can take that happiness from me which Christ keeps for me in heaven.

4. Faith gives being *in primitiis*, in the first-fruits. The Israelites had not only a right to Canaan given them by God, but had livery and seizin of Canaan, where the spies did not only make report of the goodness of the land, but brought the clusters of grapes with them, not only to encourage them to conquer, but actually to instate them in the possession of the land ; so doth God deal with a believing soul, not only give it a right, but give it some first-fruits ; there is not only a report and promise, but God hath as it were given us livery and seizin of heaven. A believing soul hath the beginnings of that estate which it hopes for ; some clusters of Eschol by way of foretaste in the midst of present miseries and difficulties. This is the great love of God to us, that he would give us something of heaven here upon earth, that he will make us enter upon our happiness by degrees. Saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 13, ‘Now abideth faith, hope, charity.’ Belief in this life is instead of intuition : by faith we begin our glory, and hereafter it is perfected, and made up in sight and vision. We have something by way of advance and foretaste, in our wants and present dangers. In nature things do not arrive at once to their last perfection ; so it is in grace, God carrieth us on by degrees to heaven’s glory and happiness. We have something by way of essay and prelibation, before we possess and enjoy the sovereign good, and those riches and treasures, and that fulness of eternal glory which God hath provided for us. But what are these first-fruits ? They are three—union with Christ, the joys of the Spirit, and grace.

[1.] Union with Christ. There is some enjoyment of God in Christ here, this is the chiefest part of eternal life. What is heaven but the eternal enjoyment of God in Christ ? And it is in a sort begun here. Union makes way for presence ; though we are not present with Christ, yet we are united to Christ ; and faith makes way for fruition. Then it will be ‘God all in all,’ 1 Cor. xv. 28 ; now it is ‘Christ in us the hope of glory,’ Col. i. 27. Now he comes to dwell in our hearts by way of pledge, that once the soul shall come to be filled up with God ; this is an earnest and beginning of our full enjoyment of him. And when once this is done, then we may be certain of glory. I say, eternal life is begun when we are united to Christ. It is the same in substance, though not in degree, with the life of heaven. When once we are united to Christ, we can never be separated. Christ is still a head, he can never leave his old mansion and dwelling-place. Saith Luther, ‘You can as soon separate the leaven from the dough, when one is wrought into the other, as you may separate Christ and a soul that is once united to him :’ 1 John v. 12, ‘He that hath the Son hath life.’ You have the fairest part of eternal life already when you have Christ in you.

[2.] The joys of the Holy Ghost. When a man hath received the consolations of the Spirit, he is in the skirts and suburbs of heaven, he

begins to enter upon his country and inheritance. Heaven begins in us, when the Holy Ghost comes with peace, confidence, and joy, and doth leave a sweet sense and relish upon the soul. Fulness of joy, that is the portion of the life to come, and is reserved for God's right hand; but here is the beginning of heaven; and peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost is but the pledge of that joy which the blessed spirits have. And therefore the comforts of the Holy Ghost which we have here in this world are called 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' 1 Peter i. 8, because it tends and works that way towards our glorious and happy estate in heaven. As the odours and sweet smells of Arabia are carried by the winds and air into the neighbouring provinces, so that before travellers come thither they have the scent of that aromatic country; so the joys of heaven are by the sweet breathings and gales of the Holy Ghost blown into the hearts of believers, and the sweet smells of the upper paradise are conveyed into the gardens of the churches; those joys which are stirred up in us by the Spirit before we get to heaven are a pledge of what we may expect hereafter. God would not weary our hopes by expecting too much, therefore he hath not only given us his word, but he gives a taste and earnest here as part of the sum which shall be paid us in heaven; by these sweet refreshments of the Spirit we may conceive of the glory of the everlasting state. Look, as before the sun ariseth, there are some forerunning beams and streaks of light that usher it in; so the joys of the Holy Ghost are but the morning glances of the daylight of glory, and of the sun of happiness that shall arise upon us in another world.

[3.] There is grace also which is the earnest of glory; it is the livery and seizin, the turf that puts us into possession of the whole field. Grace is the beginning of glory, and glory is but grace perfected. Grace is glory in the bud, and moulding, and making; for when the apostle would express our whole conformity to Christ, he only expresseth it thus, 'We are changed into his image from glory to glory,' 2 Cor iii. 18, that is, from one degree of grace to another. It is called glory, because the progress of holiness never ceaseth till it comes to the perfection of glory and life eternal. The first degree of grace is glory begun, and the final consummation is glory perfected. All the degrees of our conformity to Christ are so called. It is a bud of that sinless, pure, immaculate estate which shall be without spot and wrinkle; the seed of that perfect holiness which shall be bestowed upon us hereafter. Thus the spiritual life is described in its whole flux; it begins in grace, and ends in glory. See the golden chain: Rom. viii. 30, 'Whom he hath called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' There is no mention of sanctification, for that is included in glory. Grace is but young glory, and differs from glory as an infant doth from a man; therefore by degrees the Lord will have you enter upon your everlasting inheritance. As the heir receives his estate by parcels, so do we; first God gives us a seed, and an initial fruition, then we are drawn on further and further to a full enjoyment. The new creature, like metal in the forge, it is heaven in the moulding and framing; and God gives us the draught here below, which glory will at length finish above. Upon all these grounds faith works as if the thing were enjoyed; while we

hope and have a certain expectation, it doth as it were taste the blessing; and whilst it looks upon them in the sure promises of God, and in our head; or that which Christ hath done for us in the first-fruits; so our hopes are made to work upon us as if they were already accomplished and enjoyed.

SERMON II.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.—HEB. xi. 1.

Secondly, The benefit and advantage of this act, and the use of faith in the spiritual life.

1. It is very necessary we should have such a faith as should substantiate our hopes, to check sensuality, for we find the corrupt heart of man is all for present satisfaction. And though the pleasures of sin be short and inconsiderable, yet because they are near at hand, they take more with us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent. A man would wonder at the folly of men that should with Esau sell his birthright for a morsel of meat, Heb. xii. 16, that they should be so profane as to sell their Christ and glory, and those excellent things which the christian religion discovers, to part with the joys of christianity for the vilest price. When lust is up and set agog, all considerations of eternal glory and blessedness are laid aside to give it satisfaction. A little pleasure, a little gain, a little conveniency in the world will make men part with all that is honest and sacred. A man would wonder at their folly, but the great reason is, they live by sense: ‘Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,’ 2 Tim. iv. 10; there lies the bait, these things are present with us; we can taste the delights of the creatures, and feel the pleasures of the flesh; but the happiness of the world to come is a thing unseen and unknown. ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die,’ 1 Cor. xv. 32. This is the language of every carnal heart, let us take up with present things. Who will venture upon the practice of a duty difficult and distasteful to his affections, and forego what we see and enjoy upon the uncertain hopes of things to come? Present advantages, nay vanities, though they be small and very trifles, yet have more power to pervert us than good things at a distance, nay, than all the promises of God to allure and draw in our hearts to God. And here lies the root and strength of all temptations; the inconveniences of strictness in religion are present, there is a present distaste and present trouble to the flesh; and the rewards are future; here is the great snare: therefore how should we do to check this living by sense that is so natural to us? Why, faith substantiating our hopes provides a remedy; for that makes things to come to work as if they were already enjoyed; the day of judgment to work upon us, as if we did see Christ upon his white throne, and the books opened and heaven as if we were ready now to enter into it. Where faith is lively and strong, and is the evidence of things not seen, it baffles and defeats all

temptations. The war and conflict in men's hearts is carried on under these two captains, faith and sense. All the forces of the spiritual and regenerate part are drawn and led up by faith ; sense on the other side marshals all the temptations of the world and the flesh ; sense is all for enjoyment and actual possession. Now faith, to vanquish it, gives a substance, and makes things to come present to us, and makes us sensible of other satisfactions and contentments, which are far better ; and there lies the strength of the renewed part ; and the great success of the spiritual battle is in the liveliness of hope and in the certainty of faith, that it may make those things work as present which sense judgeth absent and afar off. That is the reason why faith and sense are so often opposed in scripture ; faith forestalls the joys of heaven, and makes them to be in the mind and judgment, and upon the heart of a believer, that the restraint from present delights may seem less irksome ; if it be laborious and difficult to serve God, yet it is for heaven. All that the devil can plead, who works by sense, is the enjoyment of a little present profit and pleasure ; he cannot promise heaven and glory, or anything hereafter ; now therein he thinks he hath the start of God—heaven is to come, but the delights and advantages of sin are at hand. Faith, to baffle the temptation, strongly fixeth the heart of a believer upon things to come, that in some sort it doth preunite their souls and their happiness together, and by giving them heaven upon earth confirms the soul in a belief of better things than the devil or the world can propose. Thus you see that to defeat the temptation there needs faith, that it may strongly fix the heart of a believer upon things to come and put him within the company of the blessed ; that in some sort he may have heaven upon earth, and such a certain persuasion of better things, that he may look upon all that the devil, the world and the flesh do oppose to him as a weak and paltry thing.

2. It gives strength and support to all the graces of the spiritual life. The great design of religion is to bring us to a neglect of present happiness, and to make the soul to look after a felicity yet to come ; and the great instrument of religion, by which it promoteth this design, is faith, which is as the scaffold and ladder to the spiritual building. It is useful to all the other graces, whether they be doing or suffering graces. We are assaulted on every side, both 'on the right hand and on the left,' as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. vi. 7 ; on the one side by the pleasures of the flesh, on the other side by the frowns of the world ; and therefore the armour of righteousness must be fitted on both sides, that we may be strengthened on the right hand against the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world, and on the left hand against troubles, disgraces, and bitter persecutions. If we would stand our ground, and be faithful in the business of our heavenly calling, we must look for these two things, to do for God, and to suffer for God ; for these two ways a christian approves himself to God ; by suffering we declare our loyalty, by doing we perform our homage.

Ques. Indeed it is a pretty question, In which of these we manifest most love to God, either mortifying our lusts, or renouncing our interests—to which the chiefest crown of honour is due ? whether to

be set upon the head of the suffering faith, or the active or doing faith?

Sol. It may be pleaded on the one side, that in holiness, or the active part of duty, we only give away our ill-being for Christ by crucifying our lusts, which are enemies to our peace as well as to the crown of heaven; but by suffering, we lose being and well-being, our lives and livelihood, and all for Christ; therefore it seems there should be more love in that. But on the other side, it may be pleaded thus, that there are many that suffer for Christ, who sacrifice a stout body to a stubborn mind; and because they are engaged they will suffer, yet are not able to quit a lust for him. And it may be pleaded, the victory is less over outward inconveniences, than inward lusts which are rooted in our nature, and so more hard to be overcome; and the enduring trouble and hardship is more easy than subduing of sin, and that it is the sharpest martyrdom a man can endure to tame his flesh, *majus in castitate vivere, quam pro castitate mori*—it is a harder thing to be a holy person than to be a martyr. Thus you see each part indeed hath its difficulties, which I have mentioned; partly to satisfy them that are not called to suffer, yet thou hast employment enough by faith to mortify thy lusts, and indeed there is the harder work; it is more easy to withstand an enemy than a temptation. When we conflict with an enemy, we do but conflict with an arm of flesh and blood; but when the apostle speaks of the inward warfare, he saith, Ephes. vi. 12, ‘We fight not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers.’ And partly to show, that there are inconveniences on both hands, and a great deal of difficulty, and there is need of all the strength that possibly we can have, both for doing and suffering. We need faith on either side, that we might be holy and willing to do for God; and that we may be courageous and willing to die for God.

But why should I debate this difference? Let me compound it rather; holiness and suffering must both go together, for no one can suffer for Christ, but they whose hearts are drawn forth to love him above all things. The priests under the law were to search the burnt-offering, and if it were scabby, or had any blemish upon it, it was to be laid aside and not offered. The Lord doth not desire a scabbed carnal man should suffer for him. He that keeps the commandments is best able to suffer for them. In Mat. v., first Christ saith, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ ver. 8, then, ‘Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness’ sake,’ ver. 10. The blessing of martyrdom is put in the last place, implying that a martyr must have all the precedent graces of meekness, humility, poverty of spirit, &c. Therefore we must look for doing the will of God, and suffering the will of God, before these promises be accomplished, and the things we hope for brought about.

[1.] To suffer for God. It is oftentimes a crime to be faithful to Christ’s interests, and a matter of danger to be a thorough christian; when men are exposed to affronts, and troubles, and disgraces, they need all the wisdom and grace that possibly they can get together. Now faith is ‘the substance of things hoped for;’ there will be our best furniture; why? for this will teach us to counterbalance our temptations with our hopes. It puts your hopes in one balance, when the devil puts the world with all terrors, disgraces and losses in the

other ; and then the soul triumphs, and says, that our losses are no more to be compared with our gains, than a feather is to be set against a talent of lead. ‘I reckon,’ saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 18, ‘that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;’ and the bitterness of the cross is allayed and sweetened by comparing our hopes with it. Thus Moses sets the recompence of reward against the loss of the pleasures, treasures, and honours of Egypt, Heb. xi. 24, 25. And those forty martyrs Basil speaks of that were kept naked in the open air in a cold frosty night, and to be burnt the next day, they cried out, ‘Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise ; troublesome is the way, pleasant is the end of the journey ; let us endure the cold for the present, and the patriarch’s bosom shall soon warm us,’ &c. These passages will truly open the meaning of the apostle, that ‘faith is the substance of things hoped for,’ &c., when we can really set one against the other, and bear the hardest lot that can befall us upon expectation of our blessed hopes. And that of the apostle doth notably open it, 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘For this cause we faint not,’ &c., why? ver. 18. ‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal ;’ that is, when we are supported and fortified by a remembrance and certain expectation of our blessed hopes. When the Jews were full of fury against Stephen, Act. vii. 56, ‘he saw the heavens opened ;’ and so he fortified himself against the anger, and shower of stones from the people. There was somewhat of miracle and ecstasy in that vision, the glory of heaven being represented not only to his soul, but possibly to his senses by some external representation. But as to the substance of the comfort itself, it is that which falls out ordinarily in a way of believing ; faith opens heaven to a believer, and brings him to the company of the blessed ; and when the soul is taken up with the thoughts of another world, it can better digest trouble here. Faith is the perspective of his soul, he seeth heaven opened and glory prepared for him, and then the temptation vanisheth. This is the reason believers can endure plundering ‘and spoiling of goods,’ Heb. x. 34. ‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for.’ Let goods go, saith a believer, so he may keep his interest in the better and more enduring substance. The christians in the primitive times were first exposed to the rapine and malice of the rude people, before actions at law or any legal process was formed against them by the persecuting edicts of the Roman emperors for their profession. And the Jews were most fierce against christians in that kind ; they would spoil them, and they could have no advantage against them. Now ‘they took joyfully,’ they were willing to part with them as Joseph with his coat to keep his conscience ; and to quit all worldly possessions, because they had an assurance of a better and a more enduring substance. So that it is of great use to support suffering graces, as fortitude and self-denial.

[2.] To do for God. As to the doing part, those graces serve for doing the will of God, which is our constant trial. Look to the several parts of our duty.

(1.) For the destructive part, or the work of mortification. When

heaven is in the eye and heart of a believer, when it is preoccupied by his faith, sin hath less power upon the heart. When faith gives substance and being to your hopes, it will appear in your lives ; you will mortify corruption, and study holiness, while you can set the pleasures on God's right hand against the pleasures of sin ; and you can reason thus, Rom. viii. 13, 'If I live after the flesh, I shall die ; but if I, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, I shall live.' You will be more able to bear with the difficulties of religion, when you see you do not act upon an uncertain futurity ; you do not fight as those that are uncertain ; as the apostle speaks, Heb. x. 36, 'That after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise.' Nay, before we have done the whole will of God, faith receives the promise ; we have the root, though not the blossom. It is true, Christ calls to suffer unpleasing austerities ; aye, but heaven makes amends for them all. Therefore whenever sensitive desires insinuate themselves, faith can see carnal pleasures are base, and but the happiness of beasts ; and they are short, 'pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25, and they issue themselves into unspeakable torments ; 'they shall mourn at last,' Prov. v. 11. When the devil would make you faint and lazy in the work of the Lord, faith can represent the short continuance of the present difficulty ; so when the devil would beget irksome thoughts of duty, faith can represent endless delights that will follow ; and then the believer determines, it is better to go to heaven with labour, than to hell with pleasure. This is that which made Moses, who had an eagle eye, so victorious : Heb. xi. 26, 'He had respect to the recompence of the reward,' which made him despise the pleasures, and treasures, and honours of Egypt. The looking upon the recompenses makes hope to have such an influence on the life ; for those views and foretastes of heaven will beget such a strong persuasion in the heart of a believer, that all the reasons in the world shall not alter, or break the force of his spiritual purpose. When the devil tempts to filthiness, uncleanness, wantonness, faith presents hopes of being consorts and followers of the unspotted and immaculate Lamb. When we are tempted to neglect duty for worldly advantages, faith doth oppose the glory of our inheritance, the riches of the new Jerusalem, and what is the hope of our high calling, and the good treasure God hath opened to us in the new covenant. If we are tempted to hunt after worldly honour, faith proposeth a crown of righteousness which the just and righteous God will give us at that day. If the fear of disgrace make us loosen and slacken our duty, faith proposeth the confusion of face wherewith the wicked shall appear before the throne of the Lamb, and the disgrace that shall fall upon the wicked at the great day. So when we are tempted to murmuring and repining under the cross, faith will assure that though the way be rough, the end of the journey will be sweet. So that the promises are like cordials next the heart, and keep the poison from seizing upon the vital spirits, and preserve the soul in a holy generosity and bravery for God ; they tell us of rivers of pleasure that stream out of the heart of Jesus Christ, and the sweet content we shall enjoy with God for evermore.

(2.) For diligence and seriousness in a holy life. The nearer things are, the greater and the more they work upon us, and the further off

the less. Those never thought of repentance that put far away the evil day, Amos vi. 3. A star at a distance, though of great magnitude, seems like a spark or spangle. We are sensible of things more, the nearer they are ; distance doth much alter our apprehensions of things ; we have not the same notions of eternity, living as we shall have when we come to die. Oh ! when time begins to draw to an end, and we are going into the other world, what would we give to live over our lives again ? Oh, how diligent, watchful, serious should we be if we had the sense of eternity upon our hearts ! Now how shall we do to make things at a distance to be near to us ? Thus, faith is the perspective of the soul. As by a perspective glass we see things at a distance as if they were present and near at hand ; so faith apprehends things at a distance, and makes them work upon us. Certain expectation produceth industrious prosecution : Phil. iii. 14, 'I press on to the mark,' saith Paul, 'for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' We make the world believe that heaven and hell are things spoken in jest, whilst we are so careless about them ; but when we apprehend them in good earnest, and have a true sense of them, then we fall a-working out our salvation with fear and trembling ; we see that all the diligence and holy care we can use is little enough to carry away this great prize of the eternal enjoyment of God. By faith you look within the veil, and lift up the heart to the heavenly joys, and this keeps the heart watchful over the blessed hope. It is the description of a believer : Jude ver. 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' Now we have no other eye but faith, and faith stands you in stead, as it confirms you in the certainty of your hopes. Heaven is in the heart by faith, and therefore the heart is in heaven by spiritual meditation ; all their thoughts are about their country : Phil. iii. 20, 'For our conversation is in heaven ;' and all the business of their lives is to approach nearer to their hopes. Paul was taken up into the third heaven. Faith giveth you a temperate and deliberate view, though not by such a rapid motion, yet by serious and solemn thoughts, and so keeps the soul in a heavenly frame and expectation. It puts your head above the clouds, and in the midst of the world to come. The apostle biddeth us to lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, 'that we may lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 19. Now faith doth not only lay the first stone, but the whole heap is increased, the work of holiness is carried on by the help and assistance of faith, which keepeth heaven and eternal life in the view of the soul, and so encourageth heavenly motions and endeavours.

(3.) For contentation, that is a necessary part of the holy life. This contentation is two-fold ; under the difficulties and inconveniences of the present life, and under the want and distance of our future comfort.

(1st.) Under the difficulties and inconveniences of the present life. Faith sweetens all the afflictions of this life by presenting the advantages of the future, and balanceth what we feel with what we do expect. The shortest life is long enough to be sensible of inconveniences and many calamities. But though the way is rough, faith seeth heaven at the end of the journey, and so it conveyeth real sup-

port and comfort into the soul and heart of a believer. A christian may live in the sweetness of tranquillity in the midst of all outward disturbances, because the presence of his hopes makes amends for all, and giveth him a happy dedolency that he feels nothing; whereas when faith is weak we soon faint: Ps. cxix. 92, 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction.' There is such a sweetness in the word, that when faith takes hold of it, the sense of worldly misery is overwhelmed and quenched. Faith is like a cordial that keeps off the poison of affliction from the vital spirits, and the poison of the encumbrances of the present life from the soul: Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living,' that is, without the sense of eternal happiness I had been utterly lost. Heaven is properly the land of the living, and that he respecteth. To see God in the land of the living is as much as to enjoy God in heaven; and so the Chaldee explaineth it, in the land of life eternal.

(2dly.) It helps us to contentation under the want and distance of our future comforts. Let it not seem a paradox, that here the conflict is hardest. It is easier to bear the evil than wait for the promised good, for sorrows are better and sooner allayed than desires. Desires are the vigorous bent of the soul, and they are impatient of check, chiefly when they are drawn forth upon reasons of religion, and usually after much mortification. It is very hard to tarry the Lord's leisure for the enjoyment of their hopes, when their hearts are weaned from the world; their pulse then beats strongly towards Christ, and it is a hard matter to cool and restrain the vehemency of their desires, especially towards our latter end. The nearer we are to the enjoyment of any good, the more impatient we are of the want of it; as a stone moveth faster, when nearest the centre. All natural motion is swifter in the close; so a christian's motions, though slow in the beginning, are swift in the close; therefore their hearts beat with longing desires, ready to break within them for the enjoyment of Christ. And this burden is the greater, because faith gives a partial enjoyment; but the same faith, which stirs up those desires, also yields the remedy against the vehemency of them. Desire is not only the fruit of hope, but patience: 2 Peter iii. 12, 'Looking for,' or waiting for, and yet 'hastening to the coming of the Lord.' The word in the original, 'looking for,' notes a patient bearing: now these two words seem contrary, waiting, yet hastening. This is the disposition of the people of God, they look for, and they hasten to the Lord's coming. They covet the everlasting state, and yet wait God's leisure. There is a vehemency and yet a regularity in their expectations, and both are promoted by this act of faith: for faith gives certainty, and that quiets the soul, though there be not present enjoyment. The first effect of faith is a present interest and title, and 'He that believeth maketh not haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. Those prelibations of heaven we have in the world, the scripture gives us under a double notion; the first-fruits, and earnest; the first-fruits or tastes how good; and an earnest or pledge, how sure. Under the quality of the first-fruits, so they do awaken desires and vehement longings: Rom. viii. 23, 'We that have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to

wit, the redemption of our bodies.' A christian hath tasted how sweet God is in Christ, therefore he groans after the full enjoyment of him. As they are an earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;' so it is a ground of waiting. We may trust God if he hath given us an earnest. It is not for the comfort of a man to carry his inheritance at his back, it is enough that he hath a right and title. Faith is every way as sure, though not as sweet as sense; and therefore a believer waits as long as God hath anything for him to do in this world upon this security of faith. It is true, he is in a strait, his desires press him, yet he will wait. Thus St. Paul, Phil. i. 23, 24, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.' A christian is thus divided between his own profit and God's will, and God's glory; but at length faith casts the scales, and brings him to a holy contention with the pleasure of God. The first-fruits beget longings; and the earnest keeps us from murmuring and discontent; so the sureness sweetens the pain which the remoteness occasions.

Use 1. To examine whether you have this kind of faith or no, which is the substance of things hoped for. To discover how little of this faith there is in the world, consider—

1. Many men say they believe, but alas, what influence have their hopes upon them? Do they affect them? Do they engage them as things present and sensible do? Alas, in the general, things temporal work more upon us than things eternal, and things visible than things invisible. A small matter will prove a temptation; a little pleasure and profit, how doth it set you a-work? We have not half that seriousness in spiritual business that we have in earthly. Surely men do not believe heaven, because they are so little affected with it; because they mind and care for it and labour for it so little. Alas! they live as if they never heard of any such thing, or believe not what they hear; every toy and trifle is preferred before it. If a poor man understood that some great inheritance was bequeathed to him, would not he often think of it, and rejoice in it, and long to go and see it, and take possession of it? There is a promise of eternal life left with us in the gospel, but who puts in for a share? Who longs for it? Who takes hold of it? Who gives all diligence to make it sure? Who desires to go and see it? Oh; that I might be dissolved, and be with Christ! Because these hopes have so little influence on us, it is a sign we do not make them exist in our hearts.

2. You may discern it by your carriage in any trial and temptation. When heaven and the world come in competition, can you deny present carnal advantages upon the hopes of eternity? do you forsake all as knowing you shall have a thousand times better in another world? So did Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25; the reason is rendered—'For he had respect to the recompence of reward; 'then is the best time to judge of your spirit; then God puts you to it; therefore they are called temptations and trials. Certainly it is of much profit to observe the issue and result of these deliberate debates and conflicts that are in the conscience. Now where faith is the substance of things hoped for, there will be a denial of present carnal advantages; heaven will be as present as the temptation,

and you will see Jesus Christ outbidding the world ; nay, that momentary sufferings are not meet to be named the same day with your hopes. If the world should come in competition with glory, to violate conscience for a present satisfaction, faith comes away from the contest with an holy disdain and indignation at such a comparison. In vain is the snare laid before the bird that is of so high and so noble a flight. The servants of the Lord were tortured, Heb. xi. 35 ; in the original it is ἐτυμφανίσθησαν, they were stretched out as a drum, yet they would not accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Will you be taken off the rack ? No. The world offered them a release, but faith offered them a resurrection, the raising of the body out of the grave to the glory of God. The world suggests earthly enjoyments, present advantages, You may have such and such preferences for the violating of conscience ; then faith comes with the treasures of the covenant. We are put to our choice many times either to wrong conscience, or accept of the world's profits ; outward conveniences are put into one scale, faith puts your hopes into the other ; one is present, the other is absent. Now observe the workings of your spirits in such cases. I confess there may be a resistance sometimes out of stubbornness, but if there be faith, it will work thus, by presenting your hopes, and casting the balance by an exceeding weight of glory. We can lose nothing, saith faith, but we shall have better in heaven ; we can gain nothing, but Christ will be more advantage to us. Upon this a believer sells all to purchase the pearl of price.

3. If faith do substantiate your hopes, though you do not receive present satisfaction, you may discern it by this, you will entertain the promises with much respect and delight. Are they dear and precious to you ? You would embrace the promises if you looked upon them as the root of the blessing. It is said of the patriarchs, Heb. xi. 13, that 'they saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' When they were to go out of the world, they took their leave of the promises with embraces ; though they came not to possession, they were persuaded of the possession ; though they lived many years before the promises concerning the Messiah took effect, yet they embraced them. Such ceremonies and compliments pass between friends ; we hug them and commend them to the Lord ; so faith hugs the promises, and commends them to God's power. Oh ! these are sweet promises ; these one day will bring a Messiah, and yield a saviour to the world. Old Jacob, when he took leave of his sons, he blessed them ; he saith to one.—' His bow shall abide in strength,' Gen. xlix. 24 ; this shall be a victorious warrior ; to another, so and so. Or, as we do, when we part with children of great hopes, just so did these holy patriarchs deal with the promises when God had given them but an obscure signification of heaven and a Christ ; they were embracing these sayings as the comfort and strength of their souls ; when they went down to the grave ; they could not with Simeon hold Christ in their arms, yet they held the promises in the arms of their faith. So it will be with you ; you will rejoice in God because of his word, Ps. lvi. 4. When you take hold of the promise, you have the blessing by the root, and this should fill you with holy joy, oh, these are great and precious promises ! 2 Peter i. 4. Here is a promise that will yield me heaven ; this complete holiness,

this the fruition of God. By this promise I can expect to meet the faithful of God in heaven ; by this promise I can expect to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; by this promise I can look for the abolition of sin ; by this for the bruising of Satan under my feet ; by this for a freedom from all temptations, desertion and trouble. And they will cherish a little spark of grace ; here is a bud of glory ; here are some morning glances, some forerunning beams^o of the light that shall shine upon us in heaven.

4. You may discern it by this, the mind will often run upon your hopes. Where the thing is strongly expected, the end and aim of your expectation will still be present with you. Thoughts are the spies and messengers of the soul. Hope sends them out after the thing expected, and love after the thing beloved ; therefore it stands upon you to see how your thoughts and principal desires are fixed. Where the thing is strongly expected thoughts are wont to spend themselves, and to be set a-work in creating images and suppositions of the happiness we shall have in the enjoyment ; and so the future condition will often run in your mind, and be present with you. For instance, if a poor man were adopted into the succession of a crown, he would please himself in the supposition of the honour and splendour of the royal and kingly state that is set up in his own thoughts. And did we believe we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven, co-heirs with Christ, we would often think of the happy time when we shall come to heaven, and see Christ in the midst of his blessed ones ; when we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, that are sat down at the feast of God, and see Paul with his crown of righteousness upon his head. But alas ! it may be said of many, heaven is not in their thoughts, their hearts dwell in this world, because they do not expect a better : therefore they are always transported with admiring thoughts of worldly greatness ; always thinking what it is to enjoy thousands, and to have no complaining in their families ; thinking of pulling down barns, and raising greater, and advancing their posterity. We are thinking of our pleasures, lusts, profits. These are the pleasing thoughts wherewith we feast our souls. We should still observe what it is we meditate upon most, which way the contrivances and deliberations of your souls do tend. Are your thoughts taken up with these carnal projects ? with those whose character it is, Phil. iii. 19, ‘That they are enemies of the cross of Christ, who mind earthly things ?’ or 2 Peter ii. 14, ‘A heart exercised with covetous practices,’ always running upon some worldly designs, plotting how to get the world into their net ? Christ describes the worldly person : Luke xii. 17, 18, ‘He thought within himself,’ &c. He created images and suppositions in his soul of barns, possessions, and heritages ; for that is the Holy Ghost’s word of the carnal man, διελογίζετο, he dialogised and discoursed with himself. But on the other side heaven will be more in the eye and mind of a christian ; and these provisional thoughts are the spies sent out to welcome our hopes. I will tell you what such an one is doing ; he is framing suppositions of the welcome he shall receive of Jesus Christ at his first coming to glory ; he is thinking of the joy between him and his fellow-saints, when they shall meet in heaven ; there is a stage set up, and a sweet representation and acting over of heaven in their thoughts.

5. You may discern it, by your weanedness from the world. They that know heaven to be their home, reckon the world a strange country. There is a more excellent glory sealed up to them in Christ, and they do the less care for worldly advantages ; certainly they do not lay out their strength and their care upon them. Who would purchase a rattle with the same price that would buy a jewel ? or dig for iron with mattocks of gold ? They will not wear out their affections on carnal things ; faith acquainteth them with nobler objects. The woman, when she knew Christ, left her pitcher, John iv. 28, 29. When Christ told Zaccheus that ‘ salvation was come to his house,’ then ‘ Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor,’ &c. Luke xix. 8, 9. But now when men only relish and favour earthly things, and live as if their hopes were only in this world, they either have no right to heaven, or believe they have none.

6. There will not be such a floating and instability in their expectation. You have already blessedness in the root, in the promises ; and though there be not assurance, there will be an affiance, and repose of the mind upon God : if there be not rest in your souls, yet there will be a resting upon God, and a quiet expectation of the things hoped for. Faith is satisfied with the promise, and quietly hopes for the performance of it in God’s due time : Lam. iii. 26, ‘ It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.’ Belief is often intermixed with doubtings, yet there will be the patience of hope, that is the least ; we should not entertain jealousies and suspicions of God. There is a free promise, though not a certain evidence, and there will be longing, where there is not comfort.

Use 2. To exhort you to work up faith to such an effect, that it may be the substance of things hoped for.

1. Work it up in a way of meditation. Let your minds be exercised in the contemplation of your hopes : Mat. vi. 21, ‘ Where your treasure is, there will your heart be.’ There is nothing that you prize but your minds will run upon it. How, freely and frequently can we think of other things, our lusts, our pleasures, our ordinary occasions ! and shall we have never a thought of that place where our treasure is ? Our God, our Christ, our happiness is there ; should not our hearts be there too ? Oh ! take a turn now and then in the land of promise ; see what is made over to you in Christ, think of the beauty and glory of that happiness ; surely if we did believe and esteem it, we would have freer thoughts of that heaven, and that happiness God hath made over to us.

2. Work it up in a way of argumentation. Faith is a reasoning grace : Heb. xi. 19, *λογισάμενος*, ‘ Accounting that God was able to raise him even from the dead.’ Reason with yourselves thus : Is there not a blessed estate reserved in heaven for all that come to God in Christ ? and so for me if come to Christ ? Others have the possession, and thou hast the grant ; the deed is sealed, and thou hast the conveyances to show ; hast thou it not under God’s hand and seal ? hast thou not a promise made to all that believe and repent of their sins, and are willing to walk with God, and are fruitful in good works ? Is not heaven made over to such ? and God’s promises were ever made good : 2 Cor. i. 20, ‘ All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen.’ Nay, hath not Christ seized upon heaven in the name of all such as

come to God by him? And hast thou not had some first-fruits, O my soul, some foretastes, some earnest of the Spirit? Hath not God given thee a little comfort, a little grace, as an earnest to assure thee of the greater sum?

3. Work it up in a way of expectation. Look for it, long for it, wait for it: Tit. ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope:' and Jude, ver. 21, 'Looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life.' I have a gracious God, and a tender-hearted Saviour in heaven; I am therefore looking and longing till I am called up to the enjoyment of them.

4. Work it up in a way of supplication. Put in thy claim—Lord! I take hold of the grace offered in the gospel; and desire the Lord to secure thy claim: Ps. lxxiii. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory;' and Ps. xlivi. 3, 'O send out thy light, and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle.'

5. Work it up in a way of close and solemn application. In the Lord's supper, there thou comest by some solemn rites to take possession of the privileges of the covenant, and by these rites and ceremonies which God hath appointed, to enter ourselves heirs to all the benefits purchased by Christ, and conveyed in the covenant, especially to the glory of heaven: there you come to take the cup of blessing as a pledge of the 'New wine in your Father's kingdom,' Mat. xxvi. 29. God here reacheth out to us by deed, or instrument, what was by promise due to every believing sinner before.

6. Work it up in your conversations by constant spiritual diligence. Is heaven sure, so sure as if we had it already, and shall I be idle? Oh what contriving, carking, striving, fighting, warring is there to get a step higher in the world! How insatiable are men in the prosecution of their lusts! and shall I do nothing for heaven, and show no diligence in pursuing my great happiness? Oh, let me 'work out my salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. Shall men rise early, and go to bed late, and all for a little maintenance to support a frail tabernacle that is ever dropping into the grave, and crumbling to dust? and shall I do nothing for my God and everlasting hopes? Certainly if we did believe these things, we should be more industrious.

Use 3. To press you to get this faith. There are some means and duties that have a tendency hereunto.

1. There must be a serious consideration of God's truth, as it is backed with his absolute power: 'I change not, therefore you are not consumed,' Mal. iii. 6. If either the counsel or the being of God change, it must be out of forgetfulness or weakness. It cannot be out of forgetfulness, for all things past and to come are present to God; it cannot be out of weakness, for his truth is backed with an absolute power; therefore a hope founded upon his promise is not liable to distrust. Truth cannot deceive, nor be deceived. Princes and potentates may often break their word out of weakness, lightness, or imprudence, they cannot foresee inconveniences; their light is bounded as well as their power; but in God there is no error or mistake; no weakness and therefore no change: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' I know I have given up my soul to an

able God; and I have waited for the accomplishment of the will of an able God; and Jude, ver. 24, 'To him that is able to keep you.' Faith stands upon these two supports, God's truth and power; his mercy is engaged by his truth, and dispensed by his power; therefore take this truth and power of God, and cast it into the lap of the soul by faith; and then you may be as certain of the event as if it were already exhibited.

2. You must relieve faith by experiences: by considering what is past we may more easily believe that which is to come.

[1.] Cast in experiences of what is past. The patriarchs believed Christ's coming in the flesh, as we believe and own: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham saw my day;' and one miracle doth facilitate and prepare belief for another. The belief of our future greatness is facilitated by the example of his own abasement. When Christ was appareled with flesh, we may easily believe we shall be clothed with glory. Our misery cannot hinder us from being glorified with God, since Christ's glory did not hinder him from being abased with men. If Christ could die, then a sinner might live. If he can suffer upon a cross, then we may reign in glory. If the greatness of promises raise any doubt, let us look to Christ; for, lest high promises should find no credit with our understanding, God clears up faith by this wonderful instance.

[2.] God hath taken you into an estate of grace and marvellous light; it is a wonderful thing that God should call poor sinners. God hath given us not only promises, but assurances; an earnest as well as his word. All that is past is but a foundation; he that spared you will much more save you; glory and pardon issue out of the womb of the same grace. Nay, glory is a lesser thing than reconciliation, or the first act of pardon. The apostle puts a much more upon it: Rom. v. 10, 'For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' When a sinner comes to be accepted into grace, there is the greatest conflict, for there is a great conflict between justice and mercy: therefore it is harder to get the guilty sinner to be absolved, than a pardoned sinner to be blessed. If he has called me, will he not glorify me? As among men it is easier to keep a pardoned man from execution, than to get a guilty man to be pardoned; so the apostle makes it an easier thing to give glory, than it is to give grace and pardon.

[3.] Compare your hopes with carnal hopes. When you look upon your own hopes, you may say with David, Ps. xxxi. 19, 'Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!' We may say we have a great deal laid up, and a great deal laid out; somewhat in hand, and more in hope. In spiritual matters our expectation comes far short of enjoyment, but in carnal matters the hope is far above the comfort; therefore they are called vanity and vexation of spirit; we expect more, and therefore are vexed with disappointment. Carnal hopes are but like dreams of waking men, that make way for fear and for sorrow. If you live in the hope of much from the world you will be but like dreamers, that have an imaginary content in their sleep, but they meet with real disappointment when

they awake; so when we expect much from the creature, we meet with nothing but burden, vanity, and vexation.

[4.] Make it the work of your lives to get your own title confirmed, and assured to the conscience. Christians are to blame for continuing so long in uncertainties, because they do not get their own title confirmed: 1 Tim. vi. 20, 'Laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold of eternal life.' If you would make eternal life present to the soul, then lay up solid evidences. And mark, he speaks 'laying up' to note this work is always a doing; always we must be laying this foundation.

SERMON III.

And the evidence of things not seen.—HEB. xi. 1.

I come now to the second part of the description—'And the evidence of things not seen.' In which you have—

1. The act—*it is the evidence.*
2. The object—*of things not seen.*

[1.] The act, which belongs chiefly to the understanding, as the other doth to the will. By the first act, faith is the hand of the soul to lay hold of eternal life; by this act, faith is the eye of the soul to look towards it, and represent it to us.

[2.] The object—'Things not seen:' it is of a larger extent than the former. All matters of faith are not future, and the objects of hope, 'things not seen,' is a term more capacious and comprehensive than 'things hoped for.' We believe past and present things as well as future, but we cannot be said to hope for them; as the creation of the world, the deluge, the deliverance of the church out of Egypt and Babylon; Christ's incarnation and passion, his glorious ascension, the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; all these things are past, and cannot be called things hoped for; but are here in a more comprehensive expression said to be 'things not seen.' Many present things we believe, as God's providence, the intercession of Christ, the influences of his grace upon the hearts of believers, pardoning mercy; these, because they could not be comprehended in the former 'things hoped for,' are delivered to us in this latter expression, 'things not seen.'

My business mainly is to discourse of the object, 'Things not seen.' But in my way,—

First, Concerning the act. Faith is said to be ἔλεγχος, 'the evidence.' The word is by some rendered the argument of things not seen; by others the demonstration; by us the evidence, and that not altogether unfitly. For though the original word hath a special emphasis, which I shall open by and by; yet this word 'evidence' is of great signification. Evidence is most proper to objects of sight, and notes clear, distinct, and full apprehension of objects present; there-

fore the testimony of eye-witnesses in matters of fact, we call it the evidence; and hence it is translated to signify the clear sight of the mind; the clear and satisfactory apprehension is called an evidence, when the object is represented so as the desire of knowledge is fully satisfied concerning the truth and worth of it; for this end doth faith serve in the soul, to give us a satisfactory knowledge of truths delivered in the word. This doth somewhat clear the text.

But we must a little examine the original word: ἔλεγχος is a term of art, and implies a conviction by way of argument and disputation. Aristotle saith, it is συλλόγισμος τῆς ἀντιφάσεως, a convincing argument or dispute, which infers conclusions contradictory to those which we held before. And in this sense it is said in scripture: John xvi. 8, 'The Spirit ἔλεγχει shall convince,' or reprove; so that ἔλεγχος is a confutation of an opinion which men were possessed of before. So it is used Titus i. 9, where, speaking of the office of a minister, ἔλεγχειντούς ἀντιλεγοντας, to convince gain-sayers, that is, confute their cavils and prejudices against the truth. Again, the philosopher describes this conviction to be such an arguing by which we prove τὸ μὴ δύνατον ἄλλως ἔχειν ἀγγ’ οὔτως ὡς ἡμεῖς λέγομεν—the thing is impossible to be otherwise than we represent. Therefore this was a fit and chosen word by the apostle, to show it was a clear or infallible demonstration of eternal verities delivered in scripture, that the man to whom it is made cannot think otherwise than as it is represented to him. Out of all which we may gather that there is in conviction—

1. A representation of clear grounds.
2. These drawn forth in argument and discourse.
2. A confutation of prejudices.
4. A sweet constraint of the mind to assent and subscribe to the truths delivered. All these are in faith—

- [1.] A clearness and perspicuity of light.
- [2.] A seriousness of arguing and dispute.
- [3.] Confuting of prejudices.

[4.] A sweet consent, or rational enforcement of the mind, a compulsion of the soul by reasons, an answerable assent to the truth of religion as certain and worthy; as I shall declare in this following discourse.

I shall wind up all in this doctrine,

Doct. That true faith is an evidence or convincing light concerning eternal verities. Or take it thus:—It is a grace that representeth the things of religion with such clearness and perspicuity of argument, that a believer is compelled to subscribe to the truth and worth of them; as a man yieldeth, when he seeth clear evidence to the contrary.

There are in faith four things:—

1. A clear light and apprehension. As soon as God converteth the soul, he puts light into it. In the old world you know the first thing that God made was light; so in the new creation, when he comes to convert sinners he infuseth light, brings in a stock and frame of knowledge into the soul; therefore it is said, Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts'—the first

and great privilege of the covenant. There is a double allusion. ‘I will put my law into their minds;’ that alludes to the ark, as the tables were kept in the ark; ‘I will write it upon their hearts;’ as the law was written upon the tables, so God writes it upon their hearts; so doth God do at first conversion; and therefore wherever there is faith, there must be light. It is true, this change is not so sensible; light enters, like a sunbeam, gently and without violence; God opens the window, and draws the curtain. This is a most necessary act. Yet there is a sensible difference afterwards: Eph. v. 8, ‘Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.’ The devil carrieth on his kingdom by blindness and darkness, and Christ governs by light. The devil keeps men in bondage and captivity by blinding their eyes, by casting a veil of prejudices before their eyes: 2 Cor. iv. 4, ‘The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.’ And God recovers them out of this captivity by opening their eyes: Acts xxvi. 18, ‘To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.’ There cannot be any act of a rational soul about an object without knowledge or light. And therefore when God would draw our consent to his covenant, he begins with the understanding, and the light of the glorious gospel shines in upon us. That which is unknown is neither believed, nor hoped for, nor desired, nor laboured after. When Christ saith to the blind man, John ix. 35, 36, ‘Dost thou believe in the Son of God?’ he answered, ‘Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?’ Certainly that which we believe we must have a thorough sight of. I say, a man must understand things before he will close with them, and receive them. And therefore the first thing that God doth is to give us a mind to know him: 1 John v. 20, ‘And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true;’ and the new creature is created in knowledge, Col. iii. 10, that so it may be able to act with reason and judgment towards objects proper for it: for, according as things are known, so they powerfully draw and attract the heart. The understanding is the great wheel of the soul, and guide of the whole man; therefore there must be something done to satisfy that; grace will begin there, and there the Lord sets up the light of faith. As sense is the light of beasts, and reason the light of men, so faith is the light of christians. And as there is a distinct light, so there is much argument and discourse. God lays up principles, and faith lays them out; it is a prudent steward and dispenser of the knowledge which God hath treasured up in the heart; therefore when unbelief makes opposition, and when the heart is careless, then faith fetcheth the law out of the ark, and pleadeth and argueth with the soul. As upon the approach of an enemy against a country they draw out their forces; so doth faith bring forth the force of the soul, use reason and discourse, and draw conclusions out of the principles of the word, that it may beat its enemy. Reason is the great enemy of faith; and when it is sanctified it is the great servant of faith; by discourse and disputing it doth convince the soul: Rom. vi. 11, ‘Reckoning yourselves,’ or reason yourselves by argument, ‘that you are dead to sin, and alive to God;’ Rom. viii. 18, ‘I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are

not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' that is, I reason thus. And it is said of Abraham, Heb. xi. 19, 'He accounted that God was able to raise him ;' he reasoned the case thus within himself, There is nothing impossible to God. This is the great advantage of a believer when he can draw out particular discourses and arguments, and fortify himself by such conclusions as are opposite to his particular distrust and trouble, when he can reason from his happiness to come, his interest in Christ. By this means faith doth set on either the promise or the threatening ; as suppose, if the heart be backward, and loath to come to the work of mortification. If it be given to carnal pleasure, faith comes and reasons thus, Rom. viii. 13, 'If you live after the flesh, you shall die,' but you do live after the flesh, therefore you shall die ; but if you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live—if you will take pains in the exercise of religion, though severe for the present, yet it shall be sweet for the time to come, you shall live. That is the reason why the word is full of syllogisms and discourses ; they are but copies of what faith doth in the heart.

2. Faith is a convictive light, that findeth us corrupt and ill-principled, and full of prejudices against the doctrine of the gospel ; and it is the work of faith to root out of the soul those carnal prejudices, carnal counsels, carnal reasonings, and carnal excuses which rise up, and exclude and shut out that doctrine which the gospel offereth to us.

[1.] Against the truth of the gospel. The heart of man is naturally full of malice and atheism. Man is not white paper, he is prepossessed with thoughts 'that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus,' 2 Cor. x. 6. The truths of religion are opposite to corrupt desires, and these desires have leavened the soul with carnal prejudices, and this begets jealousies and suspicious reluctations. Now it is the work of faith to captivate and subdue those thoughts, to batter down those prejudices that lift up themselves against the knowledge of God and obedience of Christ. And therefore one great work of the Spirit is, to reprove and convince the world not only of sin, but of righteousness and judgment, John xvi. 8 ; the Spirit doth it as the author, and faith as the instrument. We are leavened with these evil maxims, that sin is not so dangerous as it is represented to be ; that holiness is not so necessary ; that the doctrines of Christ are but fables ; and therefore the apostle saith, 2 Peter i. 16. 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ;' implying that there is such a thought in the heart of man. Man hath a great many sottish conceits of all these things, but especially of the gospel ; for conscience will sooner yield to moral truths than truths evangelical, and the doctrine which concerns the happiness of another world. We are by nature sooner convinced of sin than of righteousness, our thoughts being more presagious of evil than of good, because of the guilt ; conscience seeing nothing but sin, can infer nothing but punishment ; but we had need be convinced of all three, sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is notable that there is no figure so common in scripture as a *prolepsis*, or

anticipation of objections. Divine doctrine findeth us full of prejudices, and there is an aversion, or bearing off in the intellectual faculty, as well as a dissent. Now faith never leaveth till it bringeth in other principles.

[2.] Great prejudices there are against the worth of the gospel : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ If we be convinced that there are such things as the scripture sets forth, we are not convinced of their worth, when we do acknowledge their being ; we think it a folly to be troubled about things that are to come ; that a man may be saved without so much ado ; and why should he venture himself upon the displeasure of the world, and the consequences of it on things that will fall out we know not when ? These concits we are leavened with : but faith is a convincing light that will disprove those corrupt and carnal principles we drink in.

3. It is an overpowering and certain conviction, that is, such as dispossesseth us of our corrupt principles and grounds, and argueth us into a contrary opinion and contrary belief. Men may have some knowledge of the gospel, and yet not have faith ; they may have some smitings of heart, and disapprove of the principles wherewith they are led, and practices wherein they walk, and yet have not faith, but only a loose and wavering opinion of the things of God. Then is the soul convinced, when it is rationally, and above all cavil and contradiction, constrained to consent to the truth and worth of the things propounded in the covenant ; when there is a subduing and silencing of all those carnal principles and reasonings which were wont to prevail against the truth. What the apostle saith of the great truth of the gospel, the grand article of the christian faith, Christ’s dying for sinners, is true of the whole frame : 1 Tim. i. 15, ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.’ These things are propounded by faith, so as to beget a firm assent to them as true, and a consent to embrace and pursue them as good. In these two expressions, ‘faithful and worthy of all acceptation,’ the apostle sheweth what faith aims at ; it represents the whole frame of religion as true ; and it representeth religion as worthy of all acceptation, and then the sanctified will doth embrace it. So that the first part of the conviction of faith is a subscription to the truth. The conviction of faith bringeth the soul to a certain assent, how contrary soever it seem to sense or reason ; though it seeth nothing in sense, yet it seeth a clear certainty in the word. For though there can no reason be given of the things believed, yet faith seeth reason enough why we should believe them, and so close with them upon the authority of God speaking in the word. Faith, as the substance of things hoped for, resteth upon the power of God : but as it is the evidence of things not seen, so it resteth upon the truth of God. By this firm assent the soul doth so close with truth, that it can never be divorced : 1 Thes. i. 5, ‘Ye received the word with much assurance, and with much affliction,’ ver. 6. Though it be contrary to inward dispositions, and though it expose to outward troubles, yet they had much assurance and evidence within themselves. Alas ! men may talk of Christ and

heaven, and have some cold opinions about things to come ; they may deliver this to others, but still their evil scent remaineth with them, and their evil principles taint their hearts, and sway their practices all this while ; ‘and they do not know the grace of God in truth,’ Col. i. 6, and have not any sense of that they seem to know. No, a natural man cannot be brought to look upon the things of religion as every way certain, and above all contradiction, and to say with the apostle : Phil. i. 9, ‘That their love abounds yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.’ As cooks may dress meat for the master of the family, and his friends and children, but themselves taste not of it ; so carnal men may learn things in a disciplinary way ; they may know the literal meaning and sense of the promises, but are not convinced of the truth, and of the spiritual real worth of them ; that is, they have not a thorough sound persuasion and solid apprehension of the sinfulness of sin, of the beauty of holiness, of the excellency of Christ, of the preciousness of the covenant, of the rich treasures of grace ; *Hæc audient quasi somniantes.* Carnal men hear them as if they were in a dream ; they look upon and entertain these things as fancies, or dreams of golden mountains, or showers of pearl falling out of the clouds in a night dream.

4. It is a practical conviction. He that believeth is so convinced of the truth and worth of these things, that he is resolved to pursue after them, to make preparation for his eternal condition. Answerable to the discovery of good and evil in the understanding, there is a prosecution or an aversation in the will ; for the will necessarily follows the ultimate resolution of the judgment. Now many men have a partial conviction, but they are not thoroughly possessed of the truth and worth of heavenly things ; there is a simple approbation, but not a comparative approbation, so as to draw off the heart from other things, and ultimately to incline and bend the heart to look after them ; that is, by a simple approbation they may apprehend that it is good to be in covenant with God, but they do not like the terms. But now the last and practical conviction is, when it draweth the soul to an actual choice, when it begets not only a simple approbation, but a practical decree, when the soul saith, ‘It is good for me to draw nigh to God,’ Ps. lxxiii. 28 ; when, all things considered, a man is convinced that he ought to look after heaven upon God’s terms. It is one thing to desire a commodity simply, another thing to accept of it at such a rate and price. Many men like pardon of sin, and eternal life, and come and cheapen the great things of the gospel, but they do not go through with the bargain. This is the conviction of faith when it makes us sell all to buy the pearl of great price, and sways the whole man to pursue and look after those things God hath propounded. Thus faith brings the soul to a consent ; it convinceth not only of the truth, but the worth of religion, and proposeth it as fit for choice. This is the end of all knowledge and understanding : Ps. cxi. 10, ‘A good understanding have all they that keep his commandments.’ Those that know God aright, they love him also ; they know him as they are known of him. Now God knows us to love us, and to choose us, and to assume us to himself in Christ ; so we know him, when we love him, and choose him for our portion. There cannot be a greater

despite done to God, than to know God and choose the world; saith Christ, John xv. 24, 'You have both seen, and hated both me and my Father.' This is a hatred of God, when we have known God and yet turned aside to the world. Faith draweth altogether unto choice; doth not merely fill the head, but enters into the heart; it is a prudent and full consent. And that is the reason why faith is not only opposed to ignorance but to folly: Luke xxiv. 25, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe,' &c, for there may be folly where there is not ignorance. Every wicked man in Solomon's sense is a fool. Then do we believe matters of salvation indeed, when we consent to them as good and worthy to be embraced: Rom. vii. 16, 'I consent to the law, that it is good.' They see the ways of God are best and most satisfactory, then the practical judgment is gained.

Use. To put us upon examination and trial, whether we have such a faith or no, as is an evidence or convincing light; you may try it by the parts of it. There is the assent of faith and the consent of faith; a clear light and firm assent, and a free consent to the worth of the things of God.

1. There is a clearness and perspicuity in the light of faith, which doth not only exclude the grossly ignorant, but those that have no saving knowledge. All wicked men, though never so knowing, and never so learned, and never so well accomplished with the furniture of gifts, they are under the power of darkness. There is 'a form of knowledge,' Rom. ii. 20, as well as 'a form of godliness'; there is but a model of truth in their brains, a naked speculation; they may be able to discourse of the things of God, yet they cannot be said to have the life of God. A wild plant and a garden plant have the same name and common nature, yet differ much in their operations and virtues; so do common knowledge and the light of faith. There are two differences.

[1.] The light of faith is full of efficacy, the other not. Common water and strong water are alike in colour, but much differ in their efficacy, virtue and taste; so the common knowledge of men, though for the object it may reach as far as the light of faith, a carnal man may know all that a believer knows, yet there is not such an efficacy. This light doth not discharge its office to encourage to confidence, to quicken to obedience, to fill the heart with gladness; this light never enters upon the affections—'Wisdom entereth not upon his heart,' Prov. ii. 10. Though they have knowledge, yet they are 'barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8. It is light, but it doth little good, it is idle and ineffectual, it doth not ascend to the affections or practice.

[2.] The light of faith is full of practical discourses, always reasoning and improving the truth. The devil diverteth wicked men; though they have eyes, yet there are no holy arguings. The heathens are described to have 'a vain mind, and a dark heart,' Eph. iv. 17, 18. The apostle means they are full of vain principles, dark in their understandings, corrupt in their inferences. Their heart was blind which should have directed them in the ordering their conversations. A wicked man doth not discourse of things in the time and season of them. The mind of a christian is stirred up by faith to holy reasonings: This will be your portion, and the fruit of such doings. It is said of Mary,

Luke ii. 19, 'She kept these sayings, and pondered them in her heart ;' she traversed them in her mind by reason and discourse.

2. We may know whether faith be an evidence by the firmness of our consent. Most flatter themselves in this, they think they do not doubt of the principles of religion, but surely close with the truth of the word, yet this evidence is wanting ; for if men were more convinced, there would be a greater conformity in their practices to the rules of religion. Our consent is very weak ; how does it appear ? Partly, because sense is more believed than the word. We build more upon assurances of our own devising, than upon that which God hath given us. Our Saviour impersonates all our thoughts in that speech, Luke xvi. 31, ' If one went unto them from the dead, they will not repent ; ' we think the prophets have not spoken so feelingly and mournfully, as one from the dead would, if they should come from the flames. ' When we will indent with God, as the Jews, Mat. xxvii. 40, ' If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him ; ' or, as the devil himself, who proposed such terms to Christ, Mat. iv. 3, ' If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.' Partly, because temporal things do work far more with us than spiritual ; we fear temporal death more than spiritual, and will lose spiritual contentments for fleshly. And partly, because we are not affected with the things of religion as we would be, if they were before our eyes ; if we had with Stephen a sight of heaven, or if we could behold Christ in his glory, or coming in his majesty, these things would make us more careful.

But we may know whether the light of the gospel doth shine into our minds with such a convincing overpowering light ; and our hearts are possessed of the truth and worth of what God propounds in his covenant, by three effects of faith ; the mind, the heart, and the life will be altered.

[1.] The judgment will be altered. Thou wilt have other apprehensions of God, Christ, and eternity ; heaven and hell will seem to you other things than they did. Before they were looked upon but as fancies, and as things talked of in jest ; but now they will be apprehended as high and important realities, about which the soul is deeply concerned : Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' When our natural blindness is removed, there is another manner of discerning things, and a sounder, belief of them than before ; then a man was in darkness, now he sees by another light, now he hath eyes indeed. As they say in nature, *non dantur pure tenebrae*, there is no such thing as pure darkness ; so it is true in moral things also. In a state of nature there is not pure darkness ; there are some glimmerings of an everlasting state, and some superficial apprehensions more or less in men according to the advantages of their education. But now their eyes are opened ; they have another judgment about these things ; they are clearly discerned, so as to shake and move the heart, and pierce the soul to the quick.

[2.] The heart will be altered. When faith gives us a sight of things, the heart is warmed with love to things so seen ; ' Being persuaded, they embraced,' Heb. xi. 13. Affection follows persuasion. When we

are soundly persuaded, then the heart embraceth, closeth with them, and entertaineth them with the tenderest welcome of our souls; whereas before we talked of heaven and hell in jest, now we mind them in downright earnestness. The light and knowledge of heaven and hell that we had by education, tradition, customary talking, reading and hearing, it never pierceth the soul to the quick, never warmeth the affections; but when we have this evidence concerning things to come and things unseen, then the heart is affected.

[3.] The life will be altered. Art thou taken off from earthly things and wordly vanities, and seriously set a-work to make provision for eternity? I tell you, the most visible and sensible effect of a sound conviction is a diligent pursuit, when a man is set a-work by the notions he hath of God, Christ, and eternity; 1 Cor. ix. 26, ‘Therefore I so run, not as uncertainly: I so fight, not as one that beats the air.’ Oh then, there is running, striving, fighting. The man is certainly persuaded of things to come, and he will be taken off from those trifles and childish toys which did engross the former part of his life; and then all thy thoughts, and serious cares, and fears will be diverted into another channel, and taken up about those better things which thou art convinced of by faith. Faith hath light in it, such a light as finds us corrupted, but disposseseth us of those evil affections, and sways our practice. Therefore, are your judgments, your hearts, and your lives altered? by this you may know whether you have been acquainted with this work of faith namely, as it is ‘an evidence of things not seen.’

SERMON IV.

And the evidence of things not seen.—HEB. xi. 1.

Secondly, I come to the object, ‘Things not seen.’ Faith is an evidence, but what kind of evidence? of things that cannot be otherwise seen, which doth not disparage the evidence, but declare the excellency of faith. ‘Not seen,’ that is, not liable to the judgment of sense and reason.

What are those ‘things not seen’? Things may either be invisible in regard of their nature, or of their distance and absence from us. Some things are invisible in their own nature—as God, angels, and spirits; and all the way and work of the Holy Ghost in and about the spiritual life. Other things are invisible in regard of their distance and absence; and so things past and to come are invisible; we cannot see them with our bodily eyes, but they are discovered to us by faith. In short, these ‘things not seen,’ are either matters of constant practical experience, which are not liable to outward sense, or principles of knowledge, which are not suitable to natural reason.

1. Matters of practical experience. The blessings of religion as the enduring substance, Heb. x. 34, the benefit of affliction, the rewards and supplies of the spiritual life, answers of prayer, they are things

not seen in regard of the bodily eye and carnal feeling ; but faith expects them with as much assurance as if they were corporeally present, and could be felt and handled, and is assuredly persuaded of them, as if they were before our eyes.

2. Principles of knowledge. There are many mysteries in religion above reason ; until nature put on the spectacles of faith, it cannot see them ; as the incarnation of Christ, the doctrine of the trinity, natural parts cannot discern the truth or worth of them ; they find no sap, or savour in the truths of the gospel. They are unseen to reason, but faith makes them clear to the soul.

Doct. That the evidence of faith is conversant about things unseen by sense or natural reason.

The point admits of much speculative debate, but I shall handle it only in a practical way.

That faith is conversant about things unseen I shall prove by three reasons taken from the differences of time.

1. Because much of religion is past, and we have bare testimony and revelation to warrant it ; as the creation of the world out of nothing, the incarnation, life, and death of Christ ; these are truths not liable to sense, and unlikely to reason—that the vine should grow upon one of its own branches, that God should become a man, and die. Now upon the revelation of the word, the Spirit of God makes all evident to faith. As the centurion, when he saw the miracles of Christ's death said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God,’ Mat. xxvii. 54 ; so by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, they are convinced, surely this is no other than the word of God. Faith can see God veiled under a curtain of flesh, and Christ the Son of God hanging and dying on a cross. Yea the more impossible the thing is to nature, the fitter object of faith, when it is accompanied with divine testimony. If carnal reason object against these things, we must renounce and give it the lie when it contradicts divine truth ; for though the truths of the gospel are hidden and strange to reason, they are open and evident to faith. There are several lights God hath set up in the world, and they must keep their place ; there is sense, which is the light of beasts ; reason, which is the light of men ; faith, which is the light of saints ; and vision, which is the light of glory : now all these lights are not contrary, but subordinate. If we should examine all things by sense, we should lay aside many things evident to reason ; as to sense a star is no bigger than a spangle, or spark ; but reason knows, because of the distance, we must much otherwise conceive of them. So if we should lift up reason against faith we should discard many principles and articles of religion which are of greatest concernment. It is an old error to oppose the course of nature to God's word. Those mockers in Peter erred, because they examined things by sense : 2 Peter iii. 4, ‘All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ When men will believe nothing above their reason, and above their sense, it is a sign they want the light which God hath set up in the church, the light of faith, Jude 19, ‘Sensual, not having the Spirit.’ Men that go according to reason only, go most against reason ; nothing can be more irrational than to consult with nature about supernatural things, and to fetch the judgment of spiritual things from sense ; it is all one

as if we should bring down all rational affairs to the judgment of sense, and seek a law for man among beasts ; reason must not be captivated to fancy, but to faith. Much of religion is past, and consists of articles unknown.

2. Much of religion is yet to come, and therefore can only be discerned by faith. Fancy and nature cannot outsee time, and look beyond death : 2 Peter i. 9, ‘He that lacketh these things,’ that is, that lacketh faith, and other graces that do accompany it, ‘is blind, and cannot see afar off ;’ unless faith hold the candle to hope, we cannot see heaven at so great a distance. Heaven and the glorious rewards of religion are yet to come ; faith only can see heaven in the promises and look upon the gospel as travailing in birth with a great salvation. Faith must supply the room of sense, and believe heaven though it see it not, and look for it though we enjoy it not. As reason must not jostle out faith, so faith must not be uncertain, though it cannot aspire to the light of glory. The apostle saith, ‘We walk by faith, not by sight,’ 2 Cor. v. 7 ; that is our light here. Graceless souls may be sharp-sighted in all things that concern their temporal interest, and talk of the affairs of the present world ; but as for the things of the other world they are stark blind.

3. That of religion which is of actual and present enjoyment, sense or reason cannot discern the truth or worth of it ; therefore faith is still the evidence of things unseen.

[1.] It cannot discern the truth of it. There are few things in religion but the truth of them is contradicted by carnal sense. Eternal life is promised to us, but first we must be dead ; the resurrection of the body, but first we must moulder to dust in the grave. Blessedness is promised to us at last, but in the meantime we are of all men most miserable ; a comfortable supply of all things, but in the meantime we hunger and suffer thirst. God saith he will be a present help in a time of trouble, but he seems to be deaf to our prayers ; therefore faith is conversant about things present. The carrying on the work of grace is a thing invisible : Col. iii. 3, ‘Our life is hid with Christ in God.’ I say, the secret power and influence, by which grace is fed and maintained, is carried on from step to step in despite of devils or men. Therefore the apostle begs, Eph. i. 18, ‘That their eyes might be opened ;’ why ? what should they discern ?—that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.’ The power that goes to the maintaining of grace, till we come to the possession of the rich and glorious inheritance which God hath provided for us, it is a matter of faith not of sense. What would become of us, if faith did not supply the place of sense, and the promise did not make amends for enjoyment ? That phrase of ‘living by faith,’ is always used in opposition to present feeling. It is mentioned in four places of scripture, twice in the case of justification, Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, when we are dead in law, lost in the sense of our own consciences ; then when we can cast ourselves upon the mercies of God in Christ, this is living by faith. And it is used twice in the case of great troubles and anxiety ; when we have nothing else to live upon but our own sorrows and tears, when the destroyer in the land wasted and devoured all they had, then ‘the just shall live by faith,’

Hab. ii. 4. So when their goods were plundered, Heb. x. 34, then ‘the just shall live by faith,’ ver. 38, so that the whole life of a christian is made up of riddles ; and faith is still opposite to sense. This indeed is living by faith, to see that in God which is wanting in the creature. The whole business of christianity is nothing else, but a contradicting of sense ; God’s dealing seemeth often to make against his promise, and his way is contrary to the judgment of the carnal mind. Where would religion be were it not for faith ?

[2] As the truth of religion is not always visible to sense, so the worth of religion is checked by carnal reason : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he receive them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ Carnal reason judgeth it to be a foolish thing to renounce present delights and present advantages. Suffering zeal seemeth peevishness and frowardness to a carnal judgment and active zeal a fond niceness. Look, as astronomers have invented names of bears, lions, dragons, for those things which are glorious stars in the heavens ; so doth carnal reason miscall all the graces of the Holy Spirit. When a men makes conscience of his ways, carnal reason says that which carnal men do, We shall have you turn fool now ! So that he that will be wise to salvation, must become one of the world’s fools, that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18. Therefore that we may be sincere and strict in religion, and faithful with God, willing to do and willing to suffer, there is need of faith, that we may quit visible conveniences for invisible rewards, and despise things that are seen for things that are not seen : 2 Cor. iv. 18. ‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ That made the apostles renounce worldly interests, and mortify carnal affections. Faith discovered a worth and beauty in things not seen to reason and sense.

Having showed that faith is an evidence, and such an evidence as falls upon things that are not seen, I shall show now what is the advantage of this in the spiritual life ; for to that end doth the apostle bring this description, that they may live by faith. The use of it is exceeding great.

(1.) To embolden us against the difficulties and inconveniences of our pilgrimage. When we look to things seen, we may descry as many enemies as creatures, and are ready to cry out, as the prophet’s man, ‘Alas, Master, what shall we do ?’ 1 Kings vi. 15. Now faith presents invisible supplies in visible dangers. If Satan be at our left hand ready to resist us, God is at our right hand ready to strengthen us. If men pursue us with their hatred and displeasure, faith represents God following us with his love and kindness. It is said of Moses : Heb. xi. 27, ‘By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.’ Moses would run the hazard of Pharaoh’s wrath, would turn his back upon such a fertile land as Egypt was, to go with the people of God into the wilderness, and all because he saw invisible things. Faith sees God assisting in a spiritual manner, and then all difficulties are reconciled and all terrors that arise from visible things are mitigated and made more comfortable by invisible supplies.

(2.) To help us to bear afflictions, out of a hope of a comfortable

issue. Faith can see fruit budding out of the dry rod of affliction. Ask sense, and it will tell you of nothing but aches and smart : Heb. xii. 11, ‘No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous.’ For the present it is a grievous thing to lie under the strokes of God’s providence. If we should consult with present feeling, we should be like children, nothing but howl ; but now faith can prophesy glad tidings at midnight, and see quietness and pleasantness in the midst of smart, and rich incomes of grace and purposes of love, when God seems to deal roughly with us.

(3.) It is of use to unfold the riddles of providence. The dispensations of God are full of mysteries ; the way is shame when the end is glory. There is a handwriting of providence which is like Belshazzar’s, we cannot read it ; usually like the Hebrew tongue, it must be read quite backwards. Christ brews the water of life out of gall, wormwood, and blood. Joseph must be sold, then honoured ; first a slave, then a favourite ; cast into the dungeon, that he may be preferred at court. When God meant to bless Jacob, he makes him halt and lame, for he breaketh his thigh. The empty bucket goes down into the pit that it may come up full. Now nothing is out of order to providence, therefore nothing is out of order to faith. In the saddest providences, faith expects a good issue : Ps. lxxiii. 1, ‘Truly God is good to Israel.’ At the end of the six days God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good ; so for these six thousand years all his works of providence are good, very good. Faith, ploughing with God’s heifer, comes to learn his designs : Job xi. 6, ‘And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that it is double to that which is ; know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.’ Divine providence hath two faces ; that which is visible and outward is full of rigour, and God seems to be against us. Ay, but there is that which is not seen, and there is love, and sweetness, and clemency ; like a picture, here the face of a virgin, there the form of a serpent. That which is not seen to sense is a thousand times more comely than the surface. Common light can discern nothing of this mixture : Eccles. viii. 14, ‘In the day of adversity consider.’ Some lessons are easy to sense, but others are hard enough to faith. Sense judges only of the outside, and bark, and rind of God’s dispensations, and therefore we are perplexed and at a stand ; but faith goes into the sanctuary, Ps. lxxiii. 17, and consults with God’s word, and looks within the veil, and engageth us to wait, and teacheth us how to solve the dark riddles of providence. There are secret and invisible things which God maketh known to waiting souls.

(4.) To help us in duties of charity, that we may be rich in good works. The loss and detriment that cometh to our estates by large distributions, in doing worthily for God in our generation, by helping the poor, relieving the needy, promoting the ordinances of God ; the loss is visible ; ay, but faith sees it made up again, and that there is no such usury as lending to God. This is a duty where faith is most sensibly acted ; here God proveth faith, and here we prove God. 1. We prove God—‘Prove me, saith the Lord, by riches and offerings ;’ Mal. iii. 10. ‘If I will not open you the window of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.’ Here faith maketh sensible experiments, and adventureth upon God’s word. God giveth us a bill of exchange ; we have

nothing but a promise for what we lay out upon a work of religion : Prov. xix. 17, 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' Charity and alms is a kind of traffic, and there is a great deal of faith and trust exercised in it, if he lay out a sum upon his word and bond. A carnal mind thinks all lost and gone because he will not take God's word ; but now he that believes can see profit temporal and spiritual to arise out of this. 2. Here also God trieth us—'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.' You see no profit, but can you believe it ? Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters ; for thou shalt find it after many days.' When a man goes about doing good, such liberal distributions to a carnal mind are but like sowing the seed in a moorish ground, or like ploughing the sea ; as foolish and as vain a course as if a man should cast his bread, that is, his bread corn, upon the waters. The vulgar read it *super transeuntes aquas*, cast it upon the running stream. We cannot look for a crop out of the water ; it is carried down the stream, and a man shall never see it again. Ay, but faith, which is an evidence of things not seen, will help us in this case even to distribute our substance, for God will make it up again. When you can wait upon God contrary to sense and experience, then you have the true kind of faith.

(5.) In desertion, when God hides himself, faith only can find him out. When all comforts are lost to sense, they are present to faith. Faith can see God under his mask and veil : Isa. xlv. 15, 'Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.' When God means to be a saviour, he may hide himself, but faith waiteth upon him in the deepest and blackest desertion. John ii. 4, Christ rebukes the Virgin Mary—'Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come ;' yet ver. 5, 'His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' She had received a sharp rebuke from Christ, yet she knew he would do something, and therefore saith, 'Fill the waterpots.' True faith can pick love out of God's angry speeches, and draw gracious conclusions from the blackest and hardest premises. Saith Job, if he shall kill me, and lay more terrors upon me, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15 ; and saith David, Ps. xlvi. 11, 'Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.' When there are no apparent evidences, all comforts and graces are spent, there is not a drop of oil in the cruse, nor a dust of meal in the barrel ; yet hope can hang upon a small thread. They will wait, trust, and look for something of favour from God.

(6.) This faith is necessary to believe the spiritual mysteries of religion. So faith sees a virtue in Christ's death : Gal. ii. 20, 'Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' This is a mere riddle to sense, so to believe the salutary and gracious fruits and effects of christian ordinances, which are to appearance mean and poor, but the worth and fruit of them is unseen. Saith Tertullian, *Nihil adeo ac offendit hominum mentes, quam simplicitas divinorum operum*, there is nothing offends men's minds so much as the simplicity of his ordinances. Plain preaching seems a poor, useless thing ; a vain artifice to catch souls, it is as much despised by carnal reason in the heart, as it is by vain men

in the world, yet this is God's way to convert the soul: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' The waters of baptism heathens were offended at, when christians talked of such glorious things as to be born again, united to Christ, possessed of the Spirit, and they could see nothing but going down into the water. To find spiritual comfort and ravishing joy in the Lord's supper, when we see nothing but a piece of bread and a draught of wine; for ordinances that have no pomp and splendid appearance in them, yet to be sanctified to the most high and mysterious uses of our religion, this is that which is matter of faith.

(7.) That we may look for life in the hour of death. When sense and understanding is departing, oh! then to comfort ourselves with the love of God that shall never depart; to look for life and resurrection among dry bones, and to look on the grave as a place not of destruction, but of delivery—these are all things unseen, and require faith to believe them. Who would think such a pale horse as death should be sent from Christ to carry us to glory? and that the funerals of the body shall not be the funerals of the christian; but only of his sin and of his frailty? *Miseria moritur, homo non moritur*; it is but a shed taken down, that it may be raised in a better structure; that the way to live for ever is to die first, that we may be killed and not hurt; to believe that the morsels for the worms should be parcels of the resurrection: Job xix. 26. 'Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God;' and then to send our flesh in hope to the grave: Ps. xvi. 9, 'My flesh also shall rest in hope;' to go to the grave as a bed of ease and chamber of rest, of which Christ keeps the keys; all this is matter of faith. Our Saviour saith, John xi. 25, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live;' he puts the question, 'Believest thou this?' ver. 26; nothing else will assure it you. But have you faith? David puts the supposition: Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;' though I walk side by side with death; though my bones be cast into a common charnel, and I converse with skulls, yet Christ will look after this dust, and those rotten reliques of mortality. Faith must assure and persuade us of all this.

(8.) To believe a change of the greatest flourish and outward prosperity. When men have such a high mountain as seems to stand strong, who would think that it can ever be removed? Wickedness regnant and triumphant is ruinous and tottering in the eye of faith: Micah iv. 11, 12, 'Many nations are gathered together against Zion, that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion; yet they know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor understand his counsel.' In private cases, to look upon unjust gain that comes in plentifully upon us as a certain loss, and to see God's curse upon great and ill-gotten revenues; to determine, that 'better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right,' Prov. xvi. 8. How better? If we consult with sense, there is no such thing; but faith assures us. Would men make haste to be rich if they had this rich faith? it would tell them, This is the way to bring ruin upon themselves and their posterity: to see ruin in the midst of abundance, and loss in the midst of gain; that righteousness is the only way of gain, and scattering the ready

way to increase, is the work of faith: Prov. xi. 24, ‘There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.’ Thus you see this faith runs through all religion, and hath an influence upon every practical thing almost.

Use 1. Information. I shall draw from hence four practical corollaries.

If the object of faith be things unseen, then,

1. Christians should not murmur if God keep them low and bare, and they have nothing they can see to live upon. As long as they do their duty, they are in the hands of God’s providence. If God exercise them with troubles, humble them with wants, and delay their hopes, they have a faith which should be instead of vision and enjoyment; and when they want all things, they should be as ‘possessing all things,’ 2 Cor. vi. 10. They have an all-sufficient God to trust to, a God that bears the purse for them. If you are reduced to hard short allowance, live upon the promise—a believer has all things in the promise, though nothing in possession. This is the happiness of heaven, that God is all in all without the intervention of means. This life of faith is heaven antedated and begun, to see all in God in the midst of greatest wants.

2. In the greatest extremity that can befall us there is work for faith, but no place for discouragement; your faith is never tried till then. The church could bring one contrary out of another: Micah vii. 9. ‘Though I fall, I shall arise;’ and, saith Jonah, chap. ii. 7, ‘When my soul fainted in me, then I remembered God.’ In a spiritual death, when our comforts are spent, and all fail, then is a time for faith. Faith can traffic with Christ in the dark, and take his word for that of which we have no appearance at all. As Rom. iv. 18, ‘Abraham believed in hope against hope;’ that is, in hope according to promise, though against hope contrary to the course of nature, when all natural arguments, appearances, and grounds of hope are cut off.

3. That a christian is not to be valued by his enjoyments, but by his hopes. ‘He hath meat and drink which the world knows not of,’ John iv. 32, and can go to the rock when creatures have spent their allowance. To appearance his life is worse than other men; ay, but his better life is hidden with God, he hath invisible things to live upon, his main portion lieth in things not seen. The whole christian life is nothing else but a spiritual riddle full of mysteries and wonders; he can see things not seen, fulness in want, special love in common mercies, grace in a piece of bread. A wicked man’s enjoyments are sweet to sense, ay, but they are salted with a curse: but now in the deepest expressions of hatred, a child of God by faith can see God’s love.

4. Christ may be out of sight, yet you not out of mind. He consults not with sense, for that makes lies of God—‘I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.’ If God will not look to me, I will look to him. The dam leaves her nest, but she leaves her heart behind, and she will return. The sun at midnight seemeth low, but it will rise again: Ps. xcvi. 11, ‘Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.’

Use 2. Reproof to those that are all for sense and for present appearance.

1. Such as do not believe without present feeling.

2. Such as cannot wait upon God without present satisfaction.

[1.] There are some gross sensualists that examine all things by experience, and will not take God's word for truth, unless they feel it; whereas feeling is left for the life to come; here God will try us by faith. There are atheists in the church, but none in hell. The devils and damned spirits tremble at that which you doubt of. Here we have the light of conscience, reason and faith; but there men are left to feeling and experience; and therefore those that measure all things by present sense, and so disbelieve the world to come, they are hence to be reproved. Foolish men may go to school and learn of the ant. Since they will not learn of God, they may learn of the creature: Prov. vi. 6-8, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' There is a natural providence and instinct in these creatures to provide for their future state. Oh then, what a sot is he that will not think of his state to come, nor of any condition beyond that which he now enjoys? they are worse than the ant—than the meanest and the lowest creature, that because they see not God or Christ, or heaven or hell, therefore question whether there be indeed any such thing, yea or no: I say many such there are in the world that say, as Thomas did out of weakness, John xx. 25, 'Unless I see in his hand the print of the nails,' &c., 'I will not believe;' they will not believe that God hath provided such a deplorable and miserable estate, where the wicked shall be tormented for ever and ever, and cast out from the presence of the Lord to the devil and his angels, because they see not these things.

[2.] It reproves those that cannot wait upon God without present satisfaction, that faint if the appearance of things suit not with their mind and expectation. We are all apt to be led by sense, and to plead natural improbabilities; and when any difficulty ariseth that checketh our hopes, we question the promises of God, and say with Mary, Luke i. 34, 'How can these things be?'

(1.) This is a great dishonour to God, to trust him no further than we see him. You trust the ground with your corn, and can expect a crop out of the dry clods, though you do not see how it grows, nor which way it thrives in order to the harvest. It is a great folly to distrust the Lord, because the mercies we expect do not presently grow up and flower in our sight and apprehension. Abraham gave glory to God 'by believing in hope against hope,' Rom. iv. 18. That is an honour to God indeed, when in defiance of sense, and all outward probabilities, we can depend upon him for the accomplishment of his promise; whereas otherwise, when we confine God to present likelihoods, and must have satisfaction to our senses, or else we will not believe nor take things upon God's bare word; nor stay ourselves upon the name of God—'Except we see signs and wonders we will not believe,' John iv. 48. It is a great dishonour to God; 'we limit the holy one of Israel,' Ps. lxxviii. 41, confining him to our circle of means.

(2.) It is contrary to all the dispensations of God's providence. Before he gives in any mercy there are usually some trials. Abraham had the promise of a numerous issue, but first Sarah's womb was long barren. Nay, after that God tried him again when he hath a child, he must sacrifice Isaac, the child of the promise. It was a hard thing

for faith to interpret how he should offer Isaac, and yet believe that 'in Isaac all nations should be blessed.' Their obedience was to conflict not only with reason but with faith, and to find out an expedient to reconcile the precept with the promise; but yet he had a faith to believe it: Gen. xxii. 5, 'He said to his young men, abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.' It was neither a lie nor equivocation, but words proceeding from the assurance of faith; for though Abraham knew not how, yet he tells Isaac, ver. 8, 'God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.' And as he used Abraham the father of the faithful, so he doth all his children. Christ's kingdom is described thus: first he comes as a root out of a dry ground, Isa. liii. 2. When the tree of Jesse was withered and dried up, when it was worn down to its root and stumps, God makes it to scent and bud again; then comes Jehovah the branch; then afterwards, Luke xvii. 20, 'The kingdom of God comes notwithstanding observation.' When the kingdom of Christ was to be set up, what appearance was there? a crucified man, and a few fishermen to begin this glorious empire! What should we have done if we had lived in Christ's time, and seen the despicable beginnings of his kingdom—we that are so amazed at every difficulty and cross providence? David was first hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, that he might be settled upon a throne. Thus God is still wont to try our faith before he satisfy our sense, and to leave some weakness upon the means that the mercy may be more glorious. Consult the whole course of God's providence, and all the experiences of the saints, and you will find it to be so: Isa. xlviii. 7, 'They are created now, and not from the beginning, even before the day, when thou hearest them not, lest thou shouldst say, Behold I knew them.' Things raised out of the earth, a man could not have thought there had been any such means and instruments in the whole creation. 'He hath chosen'—τὰ μὴ ὄντα—'things that are not,' 1 Cor. i. 27; that is, things that seemed to have no such use and efficacy, 'to confound things that are.' Micah v. 7, 'And they shall be as the dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.' The herbs of the garden have visible means of supply, they are watered by hand, they tarry for man, and depend upon man's industry and providence; but they shall be as the grass in the wilderness, which thriveth by dews and showers from heaven, that come without man's thinking and care. Those that are acquainted with the usual traverses and ways of providence cannot but trust God. Usually we look on God's works by halves and pieces, and so distrust. There is a great deadness upon the means, when God will employ them to the highest uses and purposes. A painter draweth half a man, and then there is no beauty. When we look into the fiery furnace, and see nothing but devouring flames, who would think God could bring forth a vessel of honour from thence? God's dispensations have not left their wonted course, he tries us with such unlikelihoods.

(3.) It is contrary to the nature of faith—'Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?' Rom. viii. 24. Faith gives over work when we come to fruition; the trial of it is in difficulties. Faith is faith indeed, when it can expect in the midst of

dissatisfactions, and hath no relief from sense, nor help from outward things: John xx. 29, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believe.' That is true faith, when we can expect blessings upon God's warrant; though we cannot discern the way, manner, nor means, yet we hold fast the conclusion, all will work for good. Instruments miscarry; but faith looketh not to instruments, but to the promise: Esther iv. 14, 'If thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.' Her petitioning was the only visible likely way; but if God would not use it, he was satisfied with his word. Nay, sometimes the word of God seems to be tried as well as we: Ps. xii. 6, 'The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' He speaks not only of the purity and excellency of the word, but of the stability and certainty of it; when the promise is cast into the fire, and seems to lie a-burning, it is not consumed, but comes out with greater brightness and lustre. There are many, if God give them health, peace, plenty, and all manner of prosperity, then they believe him to be their God; but if they see no external evidences of his favour, they will not believe in him; this is to live by sense, not by faith; for faith is the evidence of things not seen, it can raise us above sight, and support us against sense.

(4.) It will weaken our hands in duty when we look to every present discouragement. Solomon saith, Eccles. xi. 4, 'He that observeth the winds shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.' He that is deterred from sowing his seed by every wind, and reaping his corn by every cloud, will never do his business; so he that looketh to every discouragement can never act worthily for God, but is marred by every difficulty; he is off and on, as outward things succeed or miscarry: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,' full of distractions and faintings, up and down with hopes and fears, as worldly things ebb and flow.

SERMON V.

And the evidence of things not seen.—HEB. xi. 1.

Use. 3. If faith be such an evidence of things not seen, then let us examine—have we this faith that can believe things not seen? This is the nature of true faith. Hope built upon outward probability is but carnal hope; but here is the faith and hope we live by, that which is carried out to things not seen with the bodily eye. Take these directions to discover it.

1. How doth it work as to Christ now he is out of sight? His visible presence is long since removed, and he is withdrawn within the veil and curtain of the heavens, there to perform his ministration before the Lord. Can you love Christ, and enjoy Christ, and converse with him in heaven at the right hand of the Father, as if you did see him, and converse with him bodily in the days of his flesh? It was the

commendation of their faith : 1 Peter i. 8, ‘ Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ Though you never saw him, yet can you repair to him to solve your doubts and answer your scruples, depend upon the merit of his death, and embolden yourselves in your addresses to God upon the account of his satisfaction ? Though he died sixteen hundred years ago, yet can you conceive hope by his blood as if it were shed afresh, and running before your eyes ? for so should believers do : Eph. iii. 12, ‘ In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him.’ Alas ! to most christians Christ is but a name, a fancy, or an empty conceit, such as the heathens had of their topical gods, or we of tutelar saints, some for this country and some for that. Do you pray as seeing him at God’s right hand in heaven pleading your cause, and negotiating with God for you ?

2. How doth it work as to his coming to judgment ? Is the awe of that day upon your hearts ? and do you live as those that must give an account even for every idle word, when the great God of recompenses shall descend from heaven with a shout ? Rev. xx. 12, ‘ I saw the dead small and great stand before God,’ &c. Have you such a sight as St John had ? Indeed he saw it by vision, or by the light of prophecy ; but the light of faith differs but little from the light of prophecy. They agree in many things, as in the common ground. What is the ground of the light of prophecy ? the foundation of it is divine revelation, and the same ground hath faith. And they agree in the evidence. What is prophecy ? a certain foreknowledge of things to come ; and what is faith ? an evidence of things to come. Thus they agree. They differ in these things : the light of prophecy depends upon special grounds, which is extraordinary revelation ; but the light of faith hath but that common ground, the ordinary revelation God hath made of his mind in scripture ; and they differ somewhat in the degree. Indeed there is more of ecstasy and rapture of mind that accompanieth the light of prophecy ; but in the light of faith there is some answerable affection, some impression left upon us. They differ something too in the duration and continuance with us ; the light of prophecy is but at times, when God will show such a sight or vision ; but the light of faith is a constant, steady view. Well then, what John saw once by the light of prophecy we see constantly, and are persuaded of it as certainly as if the trumpet were now sounding ; as if the throne were set, and the books were already opened, and the trembling sinners were all summoned before the Lord, expecting their doom and sentence. Have you a sight of judgment to come ? It is a thing unseen, but as faith gives you an evidence of it, doth it quicken your desires and your longings after this day ? doth it awaken your diligence ? doth it make you awful and serious in the whole course of your conversation, both in your outward carriage and secret practices, as if all were seen ? for you have seen the day of the Lord.

3. How can you comfort yourselves in the midst of all your straits and sorrows with the unseen glory of another world ? Do not you faint in your duty, but bear up with that courage and constancy which becomes christians : 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘ We faint not,’ why ? He gives you the reason of it, ver. 18, ‘ While we look not at the things that

are seen, but at the things that are not seen.' This is an evidence of our looking to things not seen, when we faint not, but go on with courage and constancy, as it becomes the heirs of the grace of life, upon sight of the invisible world. So 1 John iii. 2, 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.' And so you are no more affected with the disgraces and scorns of the world than a prince in disguise, who travels abroad unknown, if he meets not with respect and reverence answerable to his quality; he knows he is his father's heir, and this comforts him; and the unseen glory in the world to come puts comfort and strength into your hearts.

4. How doth it work as to the threatenings of the word? Can you mourn for a judgment in its causes, and foresee a storm when the clouds are but a-gathering? As Josiah had a tender heart, and trembled when the curses of the law were read: 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19, 'When the king heard the words of the law, then he rent his clothes.' It is not said when he heard news of Pharaoh Necho's invasion: no, all was quiet and composed, no trouble then had a foot in his kingdom; 'but when he heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes,' then he is solicitous to get things redressed. This general description that faith is the evidence of things not seen, the apostle exemplifies in the instance of Noah: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,' when there was no visible preparation towards the deluge; when the world was eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, building, planting, and all things went on as they were wont to do. Are you humbling your souls and fighting in secret when anything is done to bring you or your nation in danger of a threatening? God describes a gracious heart thus—'He trembles at my word,' Isa. lxvi. 2; he not only trembles at my judgment, but at my word, before the smoke or the flame of judgment breaketh out. Alas! most men are not moved with these things till the curse of God seize upon them. They know not that they which do such things as they do are in danger of the curse of God. There are threatenings against their practices everywhere, yet who lays it to heart? Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knows the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' The word of God moveth us not till we smart in our flesh. This faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, it is to be referred to the threatenings as well as to the promises. And all our diligence and caution, our watchfulness, our humiliation, that we may avert God's judgments, ariseth from this faith.

5. How doth your heart work upon the promises in difficult cases? Thereby God tries you, and thereby you may try yourselves: John vi. 5, 6, 'When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? and this he said to prove him.' God often useth the like kind of dispensation to his people. There are many mouths, and no bread; great troubles, and no means of escape; this he doth to prove you, but God knows how to order this for your comfort. When we judge by sense, and reason, and outward probabilities, in such kind of extremities we are driven to our wits' end. Now faith, which lives above sense,

will be a support and strength to your souls. In such cases reason and faith, and sense and faith, come in competition. How, which way do the workings of your spirits incline—to reason, or faith? Faith can take God's word in the midst of all difficulties; and when sense seeth nothing but hazards, wants, sorrows, then faith holds with the promise against these appearances, and rests on God whatever we feel to the contrary: Hab. iii. 17, 18, 'Though the fig-tree shall not blossom,' &c., 'yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Those hopes which hang upon the life and presence of the creature, when the creatures fail, they fail; when bread and outward supplies are gone, they are lost and undone; but the children of God have built upon a promise, and when creatures have spent their allowance, when they can no longer live upon bread, they can live upon the promise and word of God. Therefore God will prove him, and exercise him with straits and troubles; but then can he depend upon the Lord. A believer can say yea with a promise, when all the world saith no to him. The apostle saith: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'All the promises of God are in him yea, and in him amen.' The promises say yea to our hopes, and amen to our desires; and in all difficult changes still the promises keep their note, they are yea and amen. You desire such a thing according to the will of God—Amen, saith the promise, so it shall be. May I hope for such a mercy or comfort?—Yea, saith the promise. Now in straits you will find the comfort of such a truth. You ask of creatures and present appearances, May I look for good? and they answer no, but the promise still saith yea: now a believer is contented with the promises, yea, though all the world say no. Christians! there needeth nothing to your comfort but this, first to establish a regular hope, and then to trust the affirmation of the promise. Now hereby may you discern your spirits. Can you with certainty depend upon the promise, and with a quiet and calm expectation wait for the blessing of the promises in the midst of all pressures whatsoever? Carnal men limit God, and give laws to providence: Ps. lxxviii. 41, 'Yea they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.' They bind the counsels of God by their outward appearances: 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.' They give up their souls to God, and all their affairs to his disposal. He is faithful, and will be mindful of them, and he is a creator and hath power to help them, and this quiets and calms their souls under all providences.

6. You may try your assent to the promises by the adventures you make upon God's word. The promises are so many bills and bonds which God hath taken upon himself. Now what will you venture upon the warrant and encouragement the word gives? Certainly he that will venture nothing thereupon doth not believe what God hath said, 'Whoso shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God; but, he that denieth me before men, I will deny him before my Father, and before his holy angels,' Luke xii. 8, 9. Can you adventure upon Christ's word to confess him, though you should deny your present interest? so Luke ix. 24, 'Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his

life for my sake, the same shall find it.' Now urge the soul with this promise, Can I be willing to fall a sacrifice upon the interest of religion upon such a hope, or quit temporal conveniences for the enduring substance? Now lest your heart should deceive you, because every one is not called to suffer, and resolution in cold blood may faint when they come to trial, therefore look to such things as are of present use and experience. Practise upon that promise : Luke xii. 33, 'Sell all that you have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not.' Now say, What have I ventured upon this promise? can I look upon no estate so sure as that which is trusted in Christ's hands? Do I indeed count this the best way to entail a blessing upon me and my children and family afterwards, not to purchase house to house, and field to field, but to found a covenant interest, and lay up a treasure for them in Christ's hands, by a large, liberal, and free distribution to the poor? But if this seems hard though it be a clear precept in the gospel, and everywhere we are called upon to lend unto the Lord, what lusts can you renounce upon the security of eternal life? Practise upon that promise : Rom. viii. 13, 'If we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live.' Now am I willing to undergo the severities and tedious hardships of a christian life? to be much in mortifying and subduing my flesh? Can I yield to this upon these hopes? do I look upon it as better to take pains than suffer pains, to be held with cords of duty than chains of darkness, and run the hazard of being separated for ever from the presence of the Lord? Certainly, when you can neither renounce lusts nor quit interest, nor make any spiritual adventures, you do but look upon the gospel as a fable. What have we ventured upon those bonds God hath given us, and those obligations he hath taken upon himself, that he will bless us if we will yield to these and these conditions? All promises imply some duty; it is improbable we should believe them if we will undergo no hazard for them.

7. You may know whether you have this faith, which evidenceth things to come, and find out the weakness or strength of it by observing the great disproportion that is in your affections to things of sense, and things of faith. It is true, a christian is not all spirit, and therefore sensible things work more with the present state of men than things spiritual. But yet certainly in a child of God, one that believes, that hath the evidence of things not seen, there will be some suitableness: We are diverted from looking after things to come as long as we have carnal comforts to stop the mouth of conscience. But did we soundly believe the truth and worth of the great mysteries of salvation, surely we would learn more to despise temporal things in comparison of eternal. Therefore examine a little the affections and dispositions of your souls as to things present and things to come, temporal things and eternal. Examine a carnal man by his esteem; he is sensible of the sweetness of outward comforts, but hath no taste and savour of things that are to come. The former insinuate themselves into his heart with a great deal of satisfaction; he is moved and affected with them—'Who will show us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. Carnal pleasures tickle him with a great deal of delight, but he hath no taste of communion with

God. Carnal riches, with him they are the only substance, whereas spiritual and heavenly things are but as a notion. Whereas the scripture is quite otherwise; it speaks of outward things as but a fancy: Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' and of spiritual things, as those which only may be called substance: Prov. viii. 21, 'That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.' Now which dost thou esteem, thy treasure and thy substance, the world or heaven? things present, or the great things God hath promised? which are the things most take with thy heart, and draw forth thy esteem? So examine his care and industry. We toil for matters of the world, and are never weary; rise up early, go to bed late, eat the bread of sorrow, and all for a little pelf; we make nothing of the hardest labours to accomplish our worldly delights. But now, to pray, read, meditate, perform acts of worship to God, how difficult are these? and how soon do we cry out, what a weariness is it? A little time spent in duty is with a great deal of murmuring; doth not this bewray too much unbelief? 'So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God,' Luke xii. 21; that is, so earnest and diligent to grow great in the world, but cares not to furnish himself with grace. When there is such a disproportion in his care, is he persuaded of these things? There is a wide and sensible difference between things temporal and eternal, so should there be in our pursuit after them. Now when it is not only a nice debate that prevails most with men, but a plain clear case, it shows we are not fully persuaded of them. So examine a man by his hopes, and see whether he hath this evidence of things not seen. Compare your hopes in God's promises with your hopes in a temporal case; it is good to put things in a temporal case and instance: Mal. i. 8, 'Offer it to thy governor, will he accept of it?' If a prince or potentate of the world should make you a promise of a temporal inheritance, or pass over the reversion of an earthly estate for thee and thy heirs, how wouldst thou rest contented, and be satisfied with such a conveyance? so hath God done in the covenant; by a formal compact he hath demised and made over to us the great blessings of the gospel; and yet how little are our hearts satisfied with it, how full of doubts! what unstable thoughts have we about these things! If I had such great promises from an able and faithful man, would I not be more cheerful, and bear up upon these hopes? I have these promises from God, that cannot lie. So examine his fears: when a man threatens a little danger, we are careful to abstain from what may displease him, yet we can swallow lust without remorse. Adultery is punished with death in some countries; but God says: Mat. v. 28, 'That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' And God threatens again and again, not only with temporal but eternal death, torments that shall be without end and ease; yet these things do not work upon us. God saith, Rom. viii. 13, 'If you live after the flesh, you shall die;' that the delicacies of the fleshly life, if indulged, will be mortal to us. Alas! who fears this death? it is a thing to come and unseen; God doth not presently execute his sentence upon evildoers, therefore we are

not moved with it. It argues either unbelief or very great incognitancy about things of such great concernment.

8. You may know whether you have this faith by your thoughts of the ways of God, when they are despised or opposed. Faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, can see a great deal of beauty in a despised way of God, and glory in a crucified Christ; as the good thief upon the cross could see Christ as a king, when he hung dying on the cross in disgrace: Luke xxiii. 42, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Religion is often veiled under obscurity, slightings, disgraces, and contradictions of the world. God trieth us, as it were in a disguise. Now if we can spy out this inward beauty and inward glory in his ways when they are divested of all outward glory, here is an act of faith—'Christ came to his own, and his own received him not.' A carnal heart sees no worth in anything but what is full of pomp and outward splendour, it knows all things after the flesh; but a gracious heart sees a great deal of worth and beauty in the despised ways of Christ. It is said of Moses, that by faith he 'esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' Heb. xi. 26; that is, when it was a reproachful thing for him, who was so great and high in favour, to own an afflicted people, who were so burdened as they were in Egypt. Thus you have seen how you may find out whether this faith be wrought in your souls.

Use 4. To press you to get this faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, that you may believe that which God hath revealed in his word, and that solely upon God's authority and the account of his word; to quicken you to get this faith, which is of such great use to you.

1. Consider that all the difficulty in assenting to doctrines of scripture was not only in the first age. You are ready to think this faith was of use when christianity was first set up in the world, and when it was new and despised, and the powers of the world were against it; but now it is owned by all, there is no such difficulty; yes, very much still. I confess, when it was a novel doctrine, hated, oppressed, persecuted, and the generality of its professors were the poor of this world, there were mighty prejudices against the ways of God; but there were then helps; there was the sensible evidence of miracles to confirm this faith, and there was an extraordinary zeal and holiness in those that promoted it, which was a special means to strike a reverence into the consciences of men, which sensible evidence now we have not. Ay, but the articles of religion are still the same, and men are the same, and every age hath its own prejudices; so that it is still hard to believe. (1.) Because the same articles of religion that were propounded to them are propounded to us also. A man that only hearkens to his own reason, it is hard for him to believe that there is one God, and yet three that are God; that by faith a man is united to Christ, yet he on earth, and Christ in heaven; that God requires faith and conviction of all, and binds men to use the means, and yet in his secret good pleasure determines to give it to a few. These things are expressly revealed in the word, which are hard to be understood by carnal reason; and we cannot see how they can be. There are many

doctrines which must not be chewed, but swallowed ; *de re constat, quamvis de modo non constat.* (2.) Men are the same that they were before ; still natural men favour not the things that are of the Spirit, therefore are not apt to believe them that they are true. Still we are wedded to sense, and therefore not easily persuaded of things to come ; still men love not holiness, but walk after their own lusts ; therefore they will not believe God is so unmerciful as to damn all those that are not holy, and that none shall be saved but those that are born again, and walk in such a strict way of communion with God, and in the ways of godliness. (3.) Every age hath its own prejudices. Christianity was a novel doctrine. Ay, but then they had miracles ; but now there is less holiness, but no miracles ; now men are subject to atheism, because of scandals : 2 Peter ii. 2, ‘Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.’ And now there are many divisions, and variety of thoughts and opinions about matters of religion, which makes men suspect all. Therefore Christ prays : John xvii. 21, ‘Father, let them be one, as we are one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ So that if it were a difficult thing to believe then, so it is now. Therefore it concerns us to be soundly rooted in this faith.

2. Consider the benefit of a sound conviction. A clear evidence of the mysteries of salvation is a great ground of all reformation of life. What is the reason that men are so backward to practise, that they experience so little of what they believe and have received of the christian faith ? because the evidence is not clear. I do not say their interest, but the evidence and certain belief of these things. Usually christians think it is their only work to clear up their particular interest ; that is a great work—‘We must give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,’ 2 Peter i. 10. But that is not the only work ; there is a former work, which is the foundation of all, and that is, to settle the soul in a sound belief of the things to come, and have the hopes of christianity evidenced to us ; if our belief of this were more steady, there would not be such a deformity in our practice. Our affections are glued to earthly things, because we are not persuaded of heavenly things ; there is a privy atheism, which, like a worm at the root, eats out the strength and vigour of our graces, and causeth them to languish. When the mind is satisfied, and brought to a full assent, there will be a greater awe upon the practice : Heb. xi. 6, ‘He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’ This is the first thing that we should be persuaded of, that certainly there is a God ; and this God will be good to all that seek after him in Christ. If we had such a persuasion of this, we could not be so cold and careless in duty, and so bold in sin ; but we have a wavering trembling assent, and some imperfect opinions about the things of God, and not a full persuasion : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Therefore be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ If we did once know and were persuaded of this, if we had an evidence of things to come, and things unseen, we would be more steadfast and unmovable in the work of the Lord. If our expectations were greater, our observation of God would be

greater, the business of eternal life would not be so neglected; conscience would not be so sleepy, nor should we venture upon sin so often as we do; this would put life into every exhortation you hear and read. Alas! we press and exhort day after day; it works not, why? because it is not 'mingled with faith in them that hear it,' Heb. iv. 2. What earnest affections of soul would there be towards God and heavenly things if we did truly believe these things.

3. The more faith depends upon the warrant of God's word, the better; and the fewer sensible helps it hath, the more it is prized; As Christ saith, John xx. 29, 'Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.' It is the weakness of men, they will not believe unless the object of faith some way or other come under their sense. The word of God is enough.

4. Sensible things will not work, if we do not believe the word; those that think Moses and the prophets are but a cold dispensation in comparison of this, if one should come from the dead, for then they would repent and turn to God, let them read Luke xvi. 29-31. There were miracles heretofore; faith was confirmed to sense; God condescended to the weakness of the first age; but yet it is said of the people of Israel, Ps. lxxviii. 22, 23, 'They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the door of heaven,' &c. There were ever unbelievers, and carnal wretches, let God use what dispensation he will, and there will be so still. There is more in the harmony and correspondency of scripture to work men to a sense of believing than if one should come from the dead.

5. We have need now to look after this faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, because the great reigning and prevailing sin is infidelity and unbelief; which is seen by our cavilling at every strict truth, by our carelessness in the things of God, by the looseness and profaneness of those that would be accounted christians. Certainly, generally men take the great truths of religion for fabulous delusions, and look upon Christ as an impostor, and the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and eternal life, as so many idle dreams; else they could not cavil so at every strict truth and be so careless and profane as they are; for these things are irreconcilable.

6. We ought to look to this faith, because none are so resolved in the great matters of faith but they may be more resolved; no man doth so believe but he may believe more: 1 John v. 13, 'These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God.' Our assent to divine truth is not a thing that is *in puncto*, that consists in one indivisible point, so as it cannot be more or less; but it is a thing that is ever growing and never so perfect as it should be, till we come to fruition. There is something 'lacking to your faith,' 1 Thes. iii. 10; 'therefore labour after this faith which is the evidence of things not seen.'

Obj. While we establish a faith which is the evidence of things not seen, doth not this make way for every fancy and fond credulity? This was the objection that Celsus brought against Origen, that faith introduced all kind of error into the world, and cast out science. I answer!

Ans. 1. There is a reason why we believe, though we cannot always see a reason of what we do believe. Though there can be no reason given of many things that are to be believed; yet faith sees reason enough why they should be believed, and that is the authority and veracity of God speaking in the scriptures.

2. There is an aptitude or objective evidence in what is revealed in scripture, to beget faith in those that diligently exercise themselves, and had eyes to see it. The main truths which are delivered there are delivered with such reasonableness that they assure us of the rest.

Use 5. Direction to get and increase this faith.

1. Beg the illumination of the Spirit of God to show you the truth of the word, and the good things offered therein. This evidence is from the Spirit; therefore Paul prays for the Ephesians: chap. i. 17, 18, ‘That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.’ You may have literal knowledge from men, but that is weak and washy, like a golden dream of rubies; saving knowledge is only from the Spirit. They differ as strong water and running water, which have the same colour, but they differ in their taste and virtues.

2. Employ your reason, serious consideration, and discourse. The devil throws the golden ball in our way, of honour, pleasure, and profit, to divert us from heavenly things; and the intention of the mind being diverted, the impressions of religion are weak and faint; as when the bird often leaves her nest the eggs are chilled. Inconstancy is as great an enemy to faith as ignorance. The scattering and vanity of the thoughts make our assent but weak and trembling: Deut. xxxii. 29, ‘Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end,’ not only to know, but to consider it. Men have not such a deep apprehension of the beauty of holiness, and the excellency of Christ, because they do not exercise their thoughts more upon these things. By consideration truths are kept near the heart, and in the view of the understanding.

3. Labour to get a heart purged from carnal affections. Where there is more purity there will be more clearness: Mat. v. 8, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ Sin doth weaken our faith. We shall always stagger and waver in an uncertain doubtfulness concerning supernatural verities while we indulge our lusts. Sin blinds our eyes: 2 Cor. iv 3, 4, ‘If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.’ We had need keep that eye clear that shall discern things unseen, and the comforts and blessedness of another world. By sin you grieve the Spirit, which should help you in believing: Eph. iv. 30, ‘And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.’ And hereby you provoke God to give you up to natural prejudices: 2 Thes. ii. 11, ‘For this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they shall believe a lie.’ Men sin away their faith, wound their

consciences, put out that light that should guide them. And therefore get your hearts purged from sin ; for as faith makes way for holiness, so doth holiness again for faith.

SERMON VI.

For by it the elders obtained a good report.—HEB. xi. 2.

THE whole chapter is mainly spent in the praise of sanctifying faith—a necessary grace, and of a universal influence into all the parts of the spiritual life.

Divers things are attributed to faith, and that several ways : either as acts or as effects, or as fruits and consequences of faith.

1. As acts, which decipher the essence and formal nature of it, ver. 1. These are the *elicitæ*, or formal acts of faith, which substantiates things hoped for, and convinceth of things that are not seen.

2. Then there are the effects of faith, or, as the schoolmen call them, *imperatae* acts, which flow from the primary acts, as hope, valour, patience, christian self-denial ; all which are the progeny of faith, as in opening the following verse will appear.

3. Then there are the fruits and consequences of faith, which follow faith though they do not flow from it ; as the recompenses and rewards of religion, temporal or eternal, which a believer receives not from the power and worth of his faith, but from the free grace of God. Faith is a condition by the ordination and appointment of God, but not a cause ; that distinction is necessary for the clearing many parts of the chapter. Such a fruit of faith you have in the text, the approbation or testimony which the ancient fathers received from God in the word, ‘For by it the elders received a good report.’

To commend that faith which he had before described, the apostle brings the experience of the elders, or of the Old Testament saints. Here you have—(1.) The persons—*The elders* : (2.) The means—*By it* ; (3.) The blessing—*They obtained a good report*. Or else—(1.) The condition—Faith ; (2.) The consequent—*εμαρτυριθησαν*. they were witnessed to or spoken of with respect in the world ; and (3.) The subject in which both these do meet and concur.

‘The elders ;’ by faith ‘the elders obtained a good report.’

‘The elders,’ *πρεσβύτεροι*, the patriarchs, fathers ; the word is rather proper to the life of man than to the age of the world. The ancients are called *οἱ παλαιοὶ, homines prisci saeculi*, but the words are confounded. And they might well be called elders, not only for their antiquity, and living in the first ages of the world, but because most of them were *μακροβῖτοι*, of wonderful long life.

‘By it,’ *ἐν ταύτῃ*. It is not *for* faith, but *by* faith, for faith is as improper as for works ; but having faith, not by the worth and influence of it as a cause, but through faith as a condition appointed and ordained by God.

'They obtained a good report,' ἐμαρτυρήθησαν; the word signifies they received a testimony; they were attested to, or witnessed of. Now this testimony which the faithful receive is double: inward, or the testimony of conscience; outward, or the testimony of God in his word. (1.) Inward, or the testimony of conscience: 1 John. v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' (2.) Outward, from God in the word; they received a testimony. What is that? they were chronicled and set out in the scriptures as a pattern for all future ages. This is most proper, and therefore it is elsewhere rendered 'of good report:' Acts vi. 3, 'Look you out among you seven men'—μαρτυρουμένους—'of honest report.' And it suiteth with the context, for what is spoken here in the general is in particular applied to Abel and Enoch. To Abel, ver. 4, 'He obtained witness that he was righteous;' it is meant in the scriptures, where his usual title and appellation is, 'righteous Abel,' as I shall show in that verse. So to Enoch, ver. 5, 'He had this testimony, that he pleased God'—a testimony from God in his conscience, and it is now recorded in the word.

After the apostle had laid down the description of faith, he applies it to the patriarch fathers, or ancient servants of God under the dispensation of the Old Testament. Hence observe—

Obs. 1. That the fathers under the law had the same kind of faith that we have. They had the same promises, not of Canaan, but of heaven: Heb. xi. 13, 'And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' they sojourned here as in a strange country, and counted the world a strange place, and looked for heaven as their home, as we do. And the promises were made to them upon the same terms of grace. The same reason or inducement that moves God to covenant with us moved God to covenant with the fathers of the Old Testament: Deut. vii. 8, 'Because the Lord loved you,' &c. The merit upon account of which he might receive them into favour was the same, the blood of Jesus Christ: Heb. xiii. 8, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' It is not meant of his eternal divinity, and the unchangeableness of his godhead, but of the manifestation of his grace. The ages past and the ages to come, they are all one in Christ. Though we lived not in Christ's time, yet we have salvation by him, 'for he is the same for ever;' and though they lived not in our time, yet they had salvation by him, 'for he was the same yesterday,' &c. He is called the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8, that is, in God's decree; and he was slain in the figures and types of his death. Though Christ's blood was not as yet shed, yet it was decreed to be shed in the purpose of God, and so it was as effectual to them as to us.

Use. Free grace is no novel doctrine, it is the old course which God hath always taken for saving of souls. The curiosity of man is altogether for new ways; but however the new may seem more plausible, yet the old is more certain and true: Jer. vi. 16, 'Ask for the old paths, where is the good way,'—the ancient way of God's grace,—'and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Novelty maketh things liable to suspicion. *Verum quod primum*, that is true which is the first. Though error be very ancient, error may be mouldy, as well as truth greyhaired; yet that which is oldest is best, and truth is

first. Now this is God's old way, to bring in sinners to Christ by free grace. When we shall come to heaven, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we shall hear the elders of old reading lectures of free grace, and singing praises to the Lamb, by whose blood they were redeemed, and by whose merit they were brought to glory. There will be Abraham, and Moses, and all the worthies of God; God hath used several dispensations, but the end of the journey is the same.

Secondly, 'By it the elders obtained a good report.' I observe again—

Obs. 2. That the apostle ascribes their renown in the church to their faith. By it they obtained. They were famous for other graces,—Abel for righteousness and innocence; Enoch and Noah for walking with God; Moses for meekness, and wise conduct; Abraham for obedience; others for their valour and resolution; but mark, the crown is set upon the head of faith; 'by it the elders obtained a good report.' Nay, throughout the whole chapter many effects here spoken of do more directly and formally belong to other graces, as to self-denial, and christian fortitude, rather than to faith; yet still the apostle saith, by faith they did this, by faith they did that. Though the private soldiers do worthily in the high places of the field, yet the general bears away the honour, he gets the battle and wins the day; so here, all graces have their use in the holy life, all do worthily in their order and place; love worketh, hope waiteth, patience endureth, zeal sparkleth, and obedience urgeth to duty; but faith bears away the prize, this is the chiefest pin and wheel in the whole frame of salvation. Partly because it is the grace of reception on our part, by which we receive all the influences of heaven. On Christ's part it is all ascribed to the Spirit, on our part to faith; Christ lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith. There is no more intrinsic worth in faith than in any other grace, but Christ hath appointed it to this office. And partly because it directs and quickens all other graces—'Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. It feeds hope, it teaches patience to wait, it makes zeal to sparkle, it gives relief to self-denial, and encourageth obedience. Faith is like a silken string, which runs through the chain of pearl; or like the spirits that run with the blood throughout all the veins. Other graces without faith are but the moral elevations of nature; this gives a man acceptance with God; this conserves his other graces, and preserves him against assaults. It is called 'the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 11, as the shield covereth the whole armour. God hath assigned this office to faith to quicken and preserve graces, and conquer difficulties: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

Use. It shows what should be our principal care—to get faith and to maintain faith.

1. To get faith, in some sense there is as great a necessity of faith as of Christ. What good would a deep well do us without a bucket? John iv. 11, 'The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep;' so for us to have a deep well and a fountain of salvation, when we have nothing to fetch water out of these wells of salvation, what will it stead us? Faith is the life of our lives, the soul of our souls; the *primum mobile*, that moves all the wheels of

obedience. He that hath a mind to work would not be without his tools. We can do nothing in religion without faith. Oh! beg faith; it is necessary—*necessitate mediæ*: you may as well want Christ as faith; God will not violate his own order. All other graces follow the proportion of faith.

2. Maintain and keep it lively. Of all graces it is the most excellent, and of all graces it is most assaulted. The malice and spite of Satan is at your faith. Saith Christ to Peter: Luke xxii. 31, 32, ‘Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,’ he would undermine thy faith. Usually there are no defects in the life, but first there is some decay of faith. You had need keep that grace lively by which you live. The scripture speaks not only of a living faith, but of a lively faith and a lively hope, 1 Peter i. 3. The means to keep it lively are—

[1.] Meditation; that is the great fuel of faith, it keeps in the fire in the soul; it is both wood and bellows. Now meditation must look forward and backward; backward with thankfulness, and forward with hope. (1.) Backward with thankfulness upon the love of Christ, often considering the greatness and willingness of his passion. There is not a greater incentive to obedience than to consider the sufferings of Christ. A soldier, when his request was denied, showed the emperor his wounds. Oh! feed your faith with such a sight, show it the wounds, and the sufferings and bruises of Christ, then the soul will not be so sluggish and averse from duty: 2 Cor. v. 14, ‘The love of Christ constrains us.’ Meditation helps faith, and faith awakens love, and then love presseth and urgeth the soul to obedience, and will not let us be quiet. I have observed that we are more affected with what men suffer for us than what men do for us, because there is more self-denial in suffering, but only courtesy in doing. Oh, what hath Jesus Christ suffered for us? He came from heaven, and when he was to go up to Golgotha, there was no reluctance in his spirit; he did not plead, It will cost me dear, it is a hard work! but, Lo, I come to do thy will, Ps. xl. 7, 8; here are cheeks for the nippers, a back for the smiters, here is a body for the cross; and when faith urgeth this, the soul will be ashamed to go less cheerfully to the throne of grace than Jesus Christ went to the cross. (2.) Look forward upon Christ’s purchase. Heaven is a fair field for meditation, and faith hath a pleasant walk when it can walk through the land of promise; as God bade Abraham: Gen. xiii. 17, ‘Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it thee.’ Meditation should awaken faith, and encourage it to walk through the land of promise. All this will the Lord give thee. Moses’ faith was the more resolved because heaven was still in his eye: Heb. xi. 26, ‘For he had respect to the recompence of the reward.’ Keep the eye steady in the view of glory. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ fitted him for his suffering. ‘The messengers of the cross, they came to him in shining garments, ‘to talk of his decease that he should accomplish at Jerusalem,’ Luke ix. 31. It will not be mercenary for us to use the same art. Let faith climb up into the high mount by meditation, and in our thought foretaste the glory of the everlasting state, that we may be fitted to do and suffer for God.

[2.] Frequent act and exercise : James ii. 22, ‘ By works faith was made perfect.’ How could this be ? rather faith makes works perfect. It is not meant in that sense, as if work did communicate any merit and value to faith, but only that hereby it is more increased, more drawn up to the height and perfection. All graces are perfected by much use and exercise ; so is faith. Look, as the exercise of the members of the body increaseth their vigour and strength, and therefore the right arm is biggest, because of much exercise ; so inwardly the soul is bettered, and faith is much improved by frequent operation. Neglect of grace is the ground of its decrease and decay. Wells are the sweeter for the draining ; so graces are the better for this exercise.

3. A careful use of ordinances ; there faith is begotten, and there it is increased. Look, as the strength of the body increaseth by degrees, so doth the soul. We grow up to our complete stature and strength in religion by the constant supplies and ministration of the word ; the soul must be fed as well as the body. There is no stop in grace, still we must be growing : ‘ They that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God,’ Ps. xcii. 13 ; Luke viii. 18, ‘ Take heed how you hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given.’ How comes this to be the reason of the precept ? Our Saviour hereby implies, that the more we hear, the more we increase. None want ordinances so much as those that think they do not want them. Painted fire wants no fuel, and counterfeit graces need not constant support from ordinances ; but true grace languishes in the neglect of them, for the use of ordinances is God’s way and method.

Obs. 3. That the faith of the elders was an active faith, that discovered itself by good fruits and gracious actions ; otherwise it could not have brought them into credit with the church. God only knows the heart. It is actions that discover their faith, and the strength of their assent. It is but a necessary postulation, James ii. 14, ‘ Show me thy faith by thy works ;’ men have no other discovery. A bare profession or fruitless observation of the ceremonies and rites of religion would never have continued their memory in the scripture, nor made them famous. A hidden faith is of no account ; it must be discovered in the life. The apostles speaks of the Romans : chap. i. 8, ‘ Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world ;’ compare it with chap. xvi. 19, ‘ Your obedience is come abroad unto all men.’ The faith that brings in a good report must be shewed by some visible public actions.

Use. Do not content yourselves with an idle naked faith. There is more necessary to endear you to the churches of God, than a barren profession ; there are many qualifications necessary in order to a good report.

1. Mortification. Men naturally reverence strictness. It is said, ‘ Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and an holy man,’ Mark vi. 20. This will beget a fear and an awe upon worldly men, the strictness and severity of your lives. Mortified christians are the world’s wonders : 1 Peter iv. 4, ‘ Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.’ They wonder how they are able to withstand desires so pleasing and so satisfactory. Wicked men will be always speaking evil of the children of God ; yet they dread those whom they slander ; when they see them

mortified and heavenly, their hearts are convinced when their tongues revile. There is a majesty and beauty in a mortified life; some strictures and beams of the divine power that darts reverence into man.

2. Self-denial, nothing being a greater reproach unto religion than self-seeking. The world will be apt to suspect religion, as if it were but a device to gratify interests; and where professors are altogether for worldly greatness, the suspicion is fed. There is no such way to stop the clamour, as by renouncing interests; then the world will be convinced, that you think a good conscience worth something. We must overlook concernments, as well as renounce lusts. Trace all the instances, and you will find, that by this the elders live in the records of the world. A coward and an epicure are the stains of mankind. Faith is tried by its fortitude and valour, as well as by its heavenly progeny. The memory of the martyrs lives now, because of their spiritual fortitude and valour. When men can for a good conscience sacrifice their interests, it discovers the glory of religion. This will put to silence the clamours of the world, and right religion when it is suspected.

3. Duties of charity. These are visible fruits, and very much endearing to men in the world. Jesus Christ would have religion honoured this way, therefore this was the great rule our Lord taught, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive,’ Acts xx. 35. It is the great principle of our religion to be giving; nothing is more taking with the world than bounty. See what the apostle saith: Rom. v. 7, ‘For scarcely for a righteous man will one die,’ that is, for men of rigid innocence a man would hardly be brought to suffer; ‘but for a good man,’ that is, one that is bountiful and communicative, ‘a man would even dare to die.’ This doth exceedingly melt and win upon the hearts of the men of the world.

4. A holy strict life and conversation: 2 Cor. viii. 21, ‘Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.’ Men must not have wherewith to blemish our walking. The world would fain blemish religion and religious persons, therefore they pitch upon the least failing. We read of Naaman, 2 Kings v. 1, ‘He was a great man with his master, and honourable, but he was a leper;’ and that stains all his glory. This is usually the form of men’s commendations, they are thus and thus; but they will pitch upon the least failing. Usually the world’s commendation is like Joab’s salute to Abner,—compliment, and smite him under the fifth rib; they commend with many words, but they stab with a butt. As an archer draws back his hand, that the arrow may pierce the deeper; therefore we had need be strict. The world is quite contrary to God, who, in the midst of many failings, takes notice of a little good: 1 Peter iii. 6, ‘Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, and called him lord.’ The whole history is full of unbelief, nothing savoury but that word, and the Spirit of God takes notice of it. So James v. 11, ‘You have heard of the patience of Job;’ though a great many murmurings are recorded, yet the Holy Ghost pitcheth upon this, not the other. But the world passeth over the good, and pitcheth upon what is evil; as vultures flee over many gardens, but pitch upon a dead carcase. You may

observe how differently the world deals with astrologers and physicians; if astrologers fail often, and hit but once, the world cries them up for cunning men, but in a physician one gross miscarriage stains all his worthy cures. See the proneness of nature to unworthy arts; so they deal with the children of God, observe their failings and sore places, but overlook their worthy acts.

5. The duties of civil righteousness, these things are precious in men's eyes, and by these the world is preserved and kept up. The apostle speaks to subjects, that they should obey their governors, 'That they might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,' 1 Peter ii. 15; these mastiffs will be opening their throats. Now we cannot muzzle them better but by duties of righteousness to men, which very much recommend our religion to God. These things draw men to the truth, and approve of the faith of the gospel. This is that which men praise most, and therefore hereby we shall remove all occasions of offence.

Obs. 4. One of the rewards of an active faith is a good report. Here I shall show—

1. The reasons of God's ordination.
2. In what manner the Lord bestows this blessing upon believers.
3. Whether in the exercise of faith we may have an eye to this recompense, and respect the blessing of a good report.

First, For the reasons of God's ordination and appointment. I shall touch upon those that are of a chief regard and consideration.

1. That every necessary blessing may be adopted and taken into the covenant, and provision made against all inconveniences that may befall us in the way of religion. As the psalmist saith of Zion, Ps. xlvi. 12, 13, 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces;' that is, see if any thing be wanting that is necessary for use or ornament; so walk through the land of promise, and survey the riches of the covenant, see if any necessary defence or privilege be wanting to believers. The world is apt to clamour, and wicked men are ready to cast reproach upon the servants of the Lord, therefore among other blessings God hath provided for their repute and honour. Look, as against outward wants, God hath raised up a bulwark of promises to assure us of outward sustentation, and a supply of necessary provisions; so against reproaches there are frequent promises of providing for our renown and esteem in the world: 'That he will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday,' Ps. xxxvii. 6. A believer is secured against all the assaults of the world. There is balm in the covenant against the wounds that are made by the fist of wickedness, or the breach that is made by the tongue of reproach. This is the usual trial of God's people, when they are exempted from other sufferings: Ps. lxiv. 3, 4, 'The wicked whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bow, to shoot their arrows, even bitter words; that they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him and fear not.' Perfection meets with envy; men malign what they will not imitate. Religious eminency usually is blasted with slander; men scorn to see any above them. They that are at the bottom of the hill curse those that are atop. The world would have all equal; therefore when they cannot reach the eminency

of religious persons, they blast it till their repute be stained, and they are rendered criminal ; they cannot make them like themselves, which is the revenge that wicked men take. Godly men's lives are a reproach to their conscience ; so 'Noah by preparing an ark condemned the world,' Heb. xi. 7 ; and therefore by censure, and reproaches they stain their credit, that their own sin may be less odious, and avenge the wounds of their consciences by their reproaches of godly men. Now God has provided not only against their open assaults of violence, but against their privy detractions ; as he hath secured our persons against their injuries, so our names against their reproaches. Every blessing is adopted and taken into the covenant.

2. Because of the great inconveniences of reproach and infamy, either to God and religion itself, or to good men. (1.) The great inconveniences which redound to God and religion itself. The credit of religion depends much upon the credit of the persons that profess it. When godly men are evil spoken of, the way of truth suffers : Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 'They have profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land,' that is, by their scandals. The offences charged upon the worshippers of God redound to God himself, and prove in effect the disgrace of Jesus Christ. They are called christians to the disgrace of Christ. When David fell, 'he gave the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme,' 2 Sam. xii. 14. Men are apt to fly from the person to the profession. Hatred, saith the philosopher, is *πρὸς τὰ γένη*, to the whole kind ; therefore wicked men that hate religion do not seek to blast the repute of particular persons, but even of religion itself : as Haman thought scorn to lay hold upon Mordecai alone, therefore he sought to destroy all the nation of the Jews, Esther iii. 6. Now God will provide for his own honour in the honour of his servants. It was a credit for David to have so many famous worthies under him, therefore they are called David's worthies ; believers are Christ's worthies, he will be honoured in their renown. It is an honour to Christ, when believers are unspotted. It was the brag of the King of Assyria : Isa. x. 8, 'Are not my princes altogether kings ?' When Christ adopts a people to himself, it is, 'that they may be to him for a name,' Isa. lv. 13. What is the reason Christ forms such excellent vessels of mercy out of thorns and briars, out of crabbed and sour trees, but that they may be to him for a name ? And at the day of judgment, the Lord will be 'glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,' 2 Thes. i. 10, not only in his own personal glory, and the brightness of his presence, but in the social glory that results from the dignities and privileges of his people : then Christ will be admired in his saints, now he will be honoured in his saints. Believers had need to be careful of their lives, for the credit of Christ lies at stake. (2.) The inconvenience that redounds to good men. Observe all the passages of providence, and you will see, that infamy is but the forerunner of greater trouble ; showers of slander are but the presages and beginnings of grievous storms ; first it rains down in slander, then comes a storm of persecution. The devil is first a liar, and then a murderer ; wicked men take the more liberty to vex the children of God, when they are represented as criminal. It was a fashion in the primitive times to invest christians with bear-

skins, and then to bait them as bears ; and it is an usual practice of Satan to put the skin and livery of shame upon christians, and then bait them. He first blasts the repute of religious persons, then persecutes them as offenders. This is the meaning of that expression, Ps. v. 9, ‘Their throat is an open sepulchre ;’ that is, the slanders of the wicked are but preparatives to death, an alarm to persecution ; as when the sepulchre is opened, it is prepared and ready to swallow the dead carcase. The same expression is used elsewhere of the force of the Babylonians : Jer. v. 16, ‘Their quiver is an open sepulchre ;’ that is, you can expect nothing but death from the force and puissance of their assaults ; so here, the throat of the wicked is not only a burying-place for your names, but your persons ; first, men slander, and then molest the children of God. Certainly we had need look about us ; you do not know the issue and result of the present reproaches, which we cast one upon another. Eusebius, lib. viii. chap. 1, sheweth that the persecutions of the heathens took their rise from the mutual provocations, and reproaches of the christians. The devil is afraid to meddle with unstained innocency. When Valens the Arian emperor raged like a fierce beast against the orthodox, and the pastors of the churches were suppressed, he durst not meddle with Paulinus, out of a reverence to the unspottedness of his life and fame. And Ignatius in his epistle to the Traltians, speaketh of Polybius their bishop, that he was of such a clear reputation, that the atheists stood in fear of him. Wicked men cannot with any advantage to their designs meddle with such. A good report is a great security and protection against violence.

3. That God may retaliate with faith. Believers honour him, therefore he will honour them : 1 Sam. ii. 30, ‘Those that honour me I will honour.’ Never did any lose by a care to honour God. Now believers do not only honour God, by ascribing to him the glory of his excellency by internal acts of faith, but by their outward conversation : Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven ;’ 1 Peter ii. 12, ‘Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ God’s returns of blessings do often carry a proportion and suitableness to our acts of duty. None ever lose by honouring God ; besides the recompenses of the world to come, he casts honour upon them in this life. The life of a believer is a real honouring of God ; for nothing honoureth God so much as the active faith. Formal professors serve Christ just as the devil did ; the devil carried him up into an high mountain, but it was to tempt him to throw himself down again ; so they seem to set him upon the highest point of eminency in their professions and expressions, but they throw him down again, and deny him in their lives and conversations. Formal christians are like an ungracious son, he will be apt to quarrel for the honour and repute of his father, yet his courses are far more grievous to his father than other men’s reproaches ; so those that seem to plead for the repute of their religion are a more real dishonour to Christ than the blasphemer, or Turk, or pagans. The Lord is not pleased with empty prattle : Ps. l. 23, ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me ; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright

will I show the salvation of God.' No such glory as that which results to God from the christian conversation.

4. That this may be a bait to draw in others to a liking of his ways. The virgins are allured by the smell of his fragrant ointment, Cant. i. 3. When Christ's name, and the name of religion is fragrant, and yields sweet perfume in the nostrils of the world, this draws them in. It is a usual prejudice against the strictness of religion; men think it will be a debasing to them, and take off from their honours and esteem. *Coguntur esse mali, ne viles habeantur.* It is much against the hair and bent of nature to own the despised ways of God, that which brings nothing but infamy and reproach; therefore men stand off and are prejudiced. I confess this is their great sin. They should take up David's resolution: 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will be yet more vile.' But now God condescends to their infirmities, and casteth honour upon his servants to invite the world, because the temptation of honour is very taking with ingenuous spirits. Of all possessions, fame comes nearest to grace; some providences seem to be like Haman's proclamation before Mordecai, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom God delighteth to honour:' or to speak in the language of the psalmist, Ps. cxlix. 9, 'This honour have all his saints.'

Secondly, In what manner doth the Lord dispense this privilege? And it is grounded upon an objection, that may be framed thus; the servants of God are often clouded with black reproaches, 'They took away the spouse's veil,' Cant. v. 7; that is, her honour and name. David complains, Ps. xxii. 6, 'He was a reproach of men, and despised of the people;' so the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 13, 'We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things to this day.' God's jewels are often counted the world's filth. Therefore how doth God give in this recompence to the active faith? I answer, in several propositions.

1. The blessing is not absolutely complete in this life. As long as there is sin we are liable to shame. A good name is an outward pledge of eternal glory. When sin is abolished then may we expect perfect glory. In a mixed estate we must look for mixed dispensations. Here we pass through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report, 2 Cor. vi. 8. Thus it will be; there are changes and imperfections in our outward condition, as well as in the inward frame of our souls. Here God doth but begin to glorify, and begin to honour us, therefore it is not absolutely complete.

2. The wicked are not competent judges when they judge of the faithful: Luke vi. 26, 'Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you.' General applause can seldom be had without compliance, and without some sin; therefore it is spoken as a cursed thing to gratify all, and seek to draw respect from all. There is one rare instance in the third Epistle of John, ver. 12, 'Demetrius hath a good report of all men, and of the truth itself;' that is, he is generally well-famed, but usually the world is froward, and will blast those that differ from them; John xv. 19, 'If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have called you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.' It is suspicious to be dandled upon the world's knees. These elders obtained a good report;

but when? in the scriptures, in the churches. It is a favour to be the object of wicked men's reproaches. That of an heathen was notable, *Quid mali feci?* what evil have I done? when he was entertained with general applauses. The respects of an enemy makes a man suspected.

3. We have the approbation of their consciences, though not the commendation of their lips; and their hearts approve when their mouths slander; and we have their reverence, though not their praise. Wicked men dread the heavenliness and strictness of the children of God, though they do not actually honour them; their malice and hatred is more against the party, than against their personal failings, which is sometimes acknowledged; *Caius Sejus vir bonus, nisi quod christianus.* They had nothing against Daniel but only in the matter of his God, Dan. vi. 5. And Trajan's testimony in Tertullian is full, 'That he could find no fault in them worthy of death or of bonds, only they were wont to hear sermons, to sing psalms to God and Christ. Otherwise for their conversation, they were very honest, conformable to the laws of their princes, and forbade murder, theft, adultery, and other sins, which were destructive to human societies.'—*Tertul. Apolog. adversus gentes.* Oh! if we did not let fall the majesty of our conversations, we should approve ourselves to the consciences of wicked men, and our only crime would be our profession.

4. There are some special seasons when God will vindicate his people from contempt. There is a resurrection of names as well as of persons. When they seem to be buried in the throat of the wicked, which is an open sepulchre in obloquy and reproach, God raiseth them up in honour. The Lord saith, 'that he will establish Zion, and make Jerusalem a praise upon the earth,' Isa. lxii. 7; so Zeph. iii. 18–20, 'I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn your captivity before your eye, saith the Lord.' The prejudices of the world vanish, and the renown of the people of God is cleared up. Strong prejudices have a strong antidote. 'Christ was declared to be the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i. 4. There are strong providences which roll away the reproaches of God's children, Zech. iii. 4, 'Take away the filthy garments from him.'

5. Those that do observe the usual course of God's providence shall find strange traverses in reference to the good report of the saints. God is ever ready to confute the reproaches of the wicked, and to clear up the innocence of his particular servants. It is good to observe providence herein, how God brandeth the wicked, and discovers the hypocrite, and vindicates and rolls away contempt from the godly. He brands the wicked; that of Solomon is a positive rule: Prov. x. 7, 'The name of the wicked shall rot.' God leaves them to rottenness and stench, and pours infamy upon them, that their names have an ill

savour to them that are of their own party. So observe how providence doth discover an hypocrite, God giveth them up to folly and sin, whereby they contract a blot and blemish to themselves: Prov. xxvi. 26, 'His wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation.' God will put off his vizard, and expose him to shame and contempt. There is seldom a hypocrite upon the stage of the world, but his disguise falls off one time or the other. Yea, sometimes the very secret sins of God's children are made manifest: 2 Sam. xii. 12, 'Thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.' God would shame David for his secret sin and wickedness. Observe again how providence at other times doth vindicate the godly, and cast shame upon those that do accuse them: 1 Peter iii. 16, 'Having a good conversation, that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.' All the reproaches of the wicked are but like the dashing of the waves against the rock; the foam returns upon themselves; but God's people have the glory; or as they that spit against the wind, the drivel is cast upon their own faces. Patience and a good conversation will soon dispel all those mists and clouds. Hair will grow again though shaven, as long as the roots remain; so though the razor of censure bring on baldness and reproach upon the head of religion and ways of God, yet while the root doth remain, while there is a good conversation, it will spring up again. Trust God with your repute, and good names as well as your estate; the hearts and tongues of men are in his hands, and he can overrule them; nay, you have given some occasion because of your folly, yet be more circumspect, and so trust God.

Thirdly, Whether in the exercise of faith we may eye a good report? is not this vain-glory? I answer in four things.

1. Our chief care must be to do the duty, and trust God with the blessing; this is the temper of a christian. Men usually do quite otherwise; they would enjoy the blessing, and neglect the duty: 'yet honour me before the people,' said that sly hypocrite, 1 Sam. xv. 30. We are careless of service, and yet hunt for praise. *Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi*; outward praise must not be the aim of the action, but the event. And again, Aquinas; *Gloria bene contemnitur, nihil male agendo propter ipsam, et bene acquiritur, nihil malo agendo contra ipsam*. We must do well, that we may not miss of a good report; and we must not do ill, that we may obtain it. We must do things that are praiseworthy, though not to that end. Do what may be seen, though not to that end that it may be seen: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' It doth not show what is the aim and chief end of a christian, but what will follow upon such an innocent, pure, and holy conversation: Luke xiv. 10, 'Sit at the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee,' &c. (*that is taken for then*); that is, when you are so modestly humble, then the master of the house will bid you sit higher. When the heart runs out upon praise more than duty, it is naught. Therefore take heed of such secret whispers of vanity, and suppositions of applause, hearkening after the echo, the running out of the spirit or soul by unworthy low aims,

and carnal reflections. We are commanded to do things that are ‘of good report,’ Phil. iv. 8. though not with that aim.

2. If we expect it as a blessing of the covenant, we must rather look for it from God than from men, expect it as the gift of his grace for our encouragement in the ways of religion. Usually we do quite otherwise, and therefore are more careful of credit than of conscience, and are not careful of pleasing God so much as compliance with men. A man that expects a good name differs as much from him that hunts after vain glory, as he that looks after an estate differs from him that would only please himself in the repute of it, or being accounted rich. You must prefer the testimony of a good conscience before the applause of men : 2 Cor. i. 12, ‘This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience ;’ found all your hopes in the inward witness of the Holy Ghost, and take more care to be good, than to seem to be good. The people of God may be described thus ; they perform inward duties cheerfully, that they may approve their hearts to God ; and outward duties watchfully, that they may not taint their actions with any unworthy aim. Others are altogether for pleasing of men, and careless of grieving the Spirit of God.

3. All the respect that we have to men, is by a greater care of duty, to prevent undue surmises and suspicion : 2. Cor. viii. 21, ‘Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of men.’ To clear up their hearts to God, and clear up their religion to men : 1 Peter iii. 16, ‘Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers ; they may be ashamed, who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.’ Thus are you to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion to reproach you. This is but a necessary aim to undceive the world.

4. The glory of God and the credit of religion must be at the utmost end of all : Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works —he doth not stop there, ‘and glorify your Father which is in heaven ;’ and 1 Pet. ii. 12, ‘That whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ Still the utmost end must be the glory of God and credit of religion. Usually men desire a name and repute in the world, on design to promote carnal and secular advantages, but our main end should be God’s glory, and adorning the gospel. All a christian’s actions and aims terminate in reasons and ends of religion, and they eye self only in subordination to those great ends.

Use 1. Prize this blessing ; it is a sweet encouragement to you in the work of God. I observe that usually men first make shipwreck of a good name, then of a good conscience. He that is tender of his conscience will not be over lavish of his credit. The old testament, which speaketh sparingly of heaven, speaketh often of the advantage of a good name : Eccles. vii. 1, ‘A good name is better than precious ointment.’ Religion preserves the name from rottenness and putrefaction ; this will embalm, perpetuate, and preserve your memories in the churches. Religion with a good name is like a comely body in a handsome garment ; a jewel set in iron hath not the lustre as when set in gold. Grace hath its lustre, though clouded with reproaches, but a good

name will make you more cheerful ; ‘ For a good report maketh the bones fat,’ Prov. xv. 30. And it will make you more useful ; a blemished instrument is of little use. The priests under the law were to have no outward blemish or deformity. It is a qualification of a bishop, 1 Tim. iii. 7, ‘ That he must have a good report of them that are without ;’ not only be known in the churches, but of unstained life in the world. Who would drink of a suspected fountain ? or take meat out of a leprous hand ? Men are prejudiced with the offering of the Lord when the priests are scandalous : 1 Sam. ii. 17, compared with ver. 25.

Use 2. Be careful how you prejudice the good name of a believer ; you cross God’s ordination. How ought you to tremble, when you go about to take off the crown which God hath put on their heads ! Num. xii. 8, ‘ Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses ? ’ What ! against Moses ! Did not your knees smite one against another for very fear ? ‘ Thus shall it be done with the man whom the king delighteth to honour,’ Esther vi. 9. A man should be afraid to dishonour those whom God will honour. You are the worst thieves, you rob them of the most precious jewel ; no treasure like a good name : Prov. xxii. 1, ‘ A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.’ This is the very devil’s sin ; it is his proper work to be the accuser of the brethren, Rev. xii. 10 ; to frame mischievous insinuations against the children of God. The devil doth not commit adultery, break the sabbath, dishonour parents, but he doth accuse the brethren. You are but acting the devil’s part, while you are scandalising those that are eminent for grace : Ps. lxiv. 3, ‘ They whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows, to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.’ It is meant of those that speak against religious eminency ; and see their judgment, ver. 7, 8, ‘ But God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded ; so they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves.’ Better a mountain fall upon you, than when he shall come to visit this sin, the mischief of your evil tongue should fall upon you. Most odious it is in those that pretend to be christians, to do it to one another ; as for one soldier to defame another, or for a scholar to despise learning. We should rejoice in the repute of others, that they have a worthy name, and not blemish it ; as the apostle, Rom. i. 8, ‘ I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world,’ that you are eminent believers ; so Col. i 3, 4, ‘ We give thanks to God, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have unto all the saints.’ That Christ hath worthies abroad, this should be our joy. We should preserve the repute of others, because it is a good means to keep our own. Rash censures meet with a retaliation : Mat. vii. 1, ‘ Judge not, that ye be not judged.’ But you will say, If the man do but profess religion, must we not speak evil of him ? no, unless it be done with grief ; that one which belongs to Christ should dishonour himself and his profession. There may be malice where there is truth, if we are glad of their failing ; ‘ Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,’ Phil. iii. 18 ; he speaks of licentious persons under a form of godliness, which drive on a secular design. Take heed what thou sayest of those who in outward profession are more zealous than

thou. John Baptist's head in a charger is an ordinary dish at our meals. When men's hearts are warm with wine and good cheer, then the children of God are brought in like Samson, to make sport for the Philistines. When they are full, then they call for a holy person, upon whom they may vent their malice, as the Babylonians called for an holy song : Ps. cxxxvii. 3, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

Use 3. To press you to this active faith. There is great reason for it upon these grounds.

1. Because there are so many censures abroad. In times of division men take a liberty to blast opposite parties. Now shine forth in the lustre of an holy conversation, that envy may find nothing in you : Neh. v. 9, 'Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies ?' Should not we be of more strict and holy conversations, that we may silence censures and reproachers? Well-doing is the best confutation of slanders : 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' The apology is soon diffused, though not by your own mouth ; wicked men become our compurgators. Words are apt to beget strife, and are more liable to suspicion : by a good life you approve yourselves to their consciences. Revengeful replies lose their majesty. When John's disciples came to Christ to know whether he were the Messiah or no, saith our Saviour, Mat. xi. 4, 'Go tell John the things you see and hear.' Christ doth not plead for himself, but shows his works. So this will be the best confutation, those real apologies are best ; let the world see what is in us by the strictness and holiness of our lives and conversations.

2. Because there are so few good works abroad. Man is no further esteemed than he is useful. Many of the heathens were canonised for their usefulness. There is no such way to keep your memory savoury in the church as by public usefulness. For hereby a christian doth not only provide for present esteem, but for future. These elders in the text live in the world to this day. Every age should yield some honourable instances of the efficacy of faith : how few hath Christ in this age whose memory will be fresh and savoury in the church of God ? God hath still his worthies. Transmit a good example to posterity ; you may live and do good hereby after you are dead, 'Who being dead, yet speaketh,' Heb xi. 4; as Elias lived again in John Baptist, 'who came in the spirit and power of Elias,' Luke i. 17. Look, as a wicked man lives after he is dead in his evil example, and his sin is perpetuated, as Jeroboam did in the lives of the wicked kings, who walked in his way ; so do you live in some pious monument of your faithfulness to God. I have observed why most good works have been done by superstitious men, who had been men of infamous life, that they may retrieve the wickedness of their life by some acts of charity. But good men do few public works, partly because usually God's people are humbled with wants and poverty, and so have not such advantage in regard of worldly concernments. Or else they do it in a more secret way, and retail their charity out in secret by several parcels ; as good housekeepers are not prodigal in feasting. Or else, that they may abhor the way of doing good only at their death, when they can keep their

wealth no longer. Worldly men are like the mice, whieh, they say, feed in the golden mines; they eat the ore, but do not deliver it up again till they die, and are cut asunder. It is said of wicked men, ‘their bellies are filled with hid treasure,’ and when they die they leave their substance to their children, Ps. xvii. 14; but the children of God do good in their lives.

SERMON VII.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

In these words the apostle beginneth the history of faith, and therefore goeth so high as God’s ancient work of creation. His drift is to prove that faith satisfieth itself in the word of God, though nothing be seen; and he proveth it in the first instance and exercise of faith that ever was in the world—the creation.

In the words you may observe—(1.) The doctrine of the creation laid down; (2.) The means whereby we come to the understanding of it.

1. The doctrine of the creation is delivered in all the necessary circumstances of it.

[1.] The matter framed—*τοὺς αἰώνας*, the ages, that is, the world which hath endured so many ages; the essence and duration of a thing being so near akin, they are often taken for one another: Eph. ii. 2, ‘Wherein in time past ye walked, κατ’ αἰώνα, according to the course of this world:’ which is necessary to note against the Socinians, who to evade that testimony for the Godhead of Christ: Heb. i. 2, ‘By whom also he made the worlds,’ understand it of the ages, and the collection of the church in all times.

[2.] The manner—*κατηρτίσθαι*, he curiously jointed and made it, and digested it into an exquisite rank and frame.

[3.] The instrument—*ῥήματι Θεοῦ*—*By the word of God.* It may be taken either for his substantial word, or his word of power, by which all things were produced out of nothing; ‘He spake, and it was done,’ Ps. xxxiii. 9.

[4.] The term from whence God’s action took its rise—*ἐκ μὴ φανομένων*—*Of things which do not appear.* *ἐκ* doth not properly note the matter; and when we say, God made the world out of nothing, our meaning is not, that nothing is the matter whereof the world is made, as if God should bestow a new fashion and shape upon nothing; but only that it is the *terminus a quo*, not *materia ex qua*, as much as to say, God made the world when nothing was before; God had not any matter to work upon. There are some difficulties attending the Greek phrase, but I shall consider them hereafter.

2. The means whereby we come to understand this great mystery—*πίστει νοῦμεν*—*By faith we understand.* Reason will give us a

glimpse, but by faith alone we can unfold the riddle and mystery of the world's creation.

I begin with the means of knowledge as being first in the words, 'By faith we understand.' Whence observe—

1. That it is of great profit and comfort to believers to consider the creation.

2. That we can only understand the truth and wonders of the creation by faith.

The first point is a preparative to the whole discourse; it is this—

Doct. 1. It is a necessary exercise for the children of God to turn their minds to the creation.

Reasons:—

1. It discovereth much of God. God hath engraven his name upon his works; as those that make watches or any curious pieces write their names upon them; or, as he that carved a buckler for Minerva had so curiously inlaid his own name, that it could not be razed out without defacing the whole work; so hath God. The creatures are but a draft and portraiture of the divine glory. In the creatures we may discern—(1.) His essence; (2.) His attributes.

[1.] His essence. Creation is the true note of the true God; the first cause is the supreme being; therefore creation always is avouched on the behalf of the divine majesty of God: Jer. x. 11, 12, 'Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched forth the heavens by his discretion.' Jonah i. 9, 'I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.' Isa. xlvi. 6, 7, 'I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and create darkness,' &c. and ver. 8, 'I the Lord have created it.' So the apostles: Acts xiv. 15, 'That ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.' Acts xvii. 24, 'God that made the world, and all things therein.' Rom. i. 20, 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.' This was the heathens' bible, and out of this will they be arraigned at the day of Christ: the creatures will witness against them—they discovered an eternal essence, but the world discovered it not. God at first spake to the world not by words but things, and taught them by hieroglyphics. The scriptures are but a comment upon this book of the creatures.

[2.] His attributes. They are all engraven upon the creatures, but he that runneth may read these three attributes, goodness, power, and wisdom, which call for love, reverence, and trust. Ἐποίησεν ὁ ἀγαθὸς τὸ χρήσιμον, ὁ σοφὸς τὸ καλλιστόν, ὁ δύνατος τὸ μέγιστον—Basil. The goodness of God is seen in the usefulness of the creatures to man; the power of God in the stupendousness and wonderfulness of the works; and the wisdom of God in the apt structure, constitution, and order of all things. First he createth, then distinguisheth, then adorneth. The first work was to create heaven and earth out of nothing; there is his power. God's next work is a wise distribution and ordination, he distinguisheth night from day, darkness from light, waters above the

firmament from waters beneath the firmament ; the sea from the dry land ; there is his wisdom. Then he decked the earth with plants and beasts, the sea with fishes, the air with birds, the firmament with stars ; there is his goodness. Let us explain these a little more particularly.

(1.) His goodness. The creation is nothing else but an effusion of the goodness of God : Ps. cxv. 3, ‘Our God is in heaven, he hath done whatsoever he pleased.’ He acteth at liberty ; he might have made it sooner or later ; the only reason is the counsel of his own will : Rev. iv. 11, ‘Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ Creatures work out of a servile necessity. The trinity was not solitary. God was happy enough without us, and had a fulness and sufficiency of happiness within himself, only he would have us to participate of his goodness. God’s great aim was to communicate his goodness to creatures ; and therefore in making the world, he did not only aim at his own glory, but the benefit of man, that man might have a place for his exercise and a dwelling for his eternal rest. A place for his exercise : Isa. xlv. 18, ‘He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited ;’ so Ps. cxv. 16, ‘The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord’s, but the earth hath he given to the children of men.’ In heaven God sitteth in his palace, in the midst of his best creatures ; but the earth, the round world is ours. And heaven was prepared before the beginning of the world for their place of rest : Mat. xxv. 34, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ His love was towards us before the world was, and we shall reap the fruits of it, when the world shall be no more.

(2.) His power. God brought all things out of the womb of nothing ; his *fiat* was enough : Isa. xl. 26, ‘Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number ; he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.’ The force of the cause appeareth in the effects, and God’s power in the creatures. This is the most visible attribute : Rom. i. 20, ‘For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.’ Men touched with no sense or reverence of religion, yet will have this in their mouths, God Almighty.

(3.) His wisdom. The admirableness and comely variety of God’s works doth easily offer it to our thoughts. In the work you may discern a wise workman : Ps. cxxxvi. 5, ‘To him that by wisdom made the heavens : for his mercy endureth for ever.’ So Prov. iii. 19, ‘The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ; by understanding hath he established the heavens.’ The wisdom of God appeareth—(1.) In the order of making ; (2) In the order of placing all creatures.

(1st.) In making of them. In simple things, God began with those which are most perfect, and came nearest to his own essence. His first creature is light, which of all qualities is most pure and undefeate, and is not stained by passing through places most impure. The first garment God put on in the creatures’ eyes was light ; Ps. civ. 2, ‘Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.’ Then all the elements in mixt bodies ; God took another method, from imperfect to perfect : first, things that have a being, as the firmament ; then life, as plants ; then

sense, as beasts ; then reason, as man. First, God would provide the places of heaven and earth, and then the creatures to dwell in them ; first the food, then the beasts. Provision was made for the inhabitants of the earth, as grass for beasts, and light for all living and moving creatures. God provided for the necessities of beasts, ere he would bring them into the world. God made first plants, that have but a growing life ; then beasts, fishes, fowls, that have a feeling life ; then man that hath a rational life. God would teach us to go from good to better. Man was made last, as most excellent ; his palace is furnished with all things necessary, and then like a prince he is sent into the world to rule and reign.

(2dly.) In disposing all things into their apt cells for the beauty and service of the whole. There are not such great beasts in the earth as in the sea, to avoid a waste of food, which would be consumed by the beasts of the land, to the prejudice of man. All things are wonderfully made.

2. It is a wonderful advantage to faith to give us hope and consolation in the greatest distresses. The whole creation is a standing monument of God's power ; we see what he can do : Ps. cxxiv. 8, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' As long as heaven and earth is standing, we need not distrust God's power : Jer. xxxii. 17, 'Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and stretched out arm ; and there is nothing too hard for thee.' So Ps. cxlv. 5, 6, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help ; whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven, and earth, and sea, and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever.' The works of creation are but pawns and pledges of the possibility and certainty of every thing promised. Every promise is as powerful as God's first creating word, 'let there be light, let there be day.'

3. It putteth us in mind of our duty.

[1.] To stir up in us a reverence and dread of God above the creatures. We are used to things of sense, they work with us. Make much of the creator, and the creatures shall do thee no harm : Acts iv. 24, 'Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.'

[2.] To stir up humility to God : Rom. ix. 20, 'Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?' Isa. xlv. 9, 'Wo unto him that striveth with his maker ; let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ; or thy work, He hath no hands ?' Gen. xviii. 27, 'Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.'

[3.] To make us humble and kind to men : Acts xvii. 26, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth.' *Omnis sanguis concelorum*, Isa. lviii. 7, 'That thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh.'

Use. It serveth to quicken us to think of the creation. But oh, how backward, cold and sluggish are we in this work ! either we use the creatures as beasts, without thankfulness, and looking up to the

creator; or else, as philosophers, there is more curiosity than profit in our researches: but I observe christians are coldly affected with such an argument. The causes are these—

1. We have an higher light. Sense in beasts is more acute, so reason in heathens, because it is their only light. But this should not be, we should not slight the works of God, because of a higher revelation. When a man is able to read, he should not lay aside the use of letters. The creation is a good primer for us to spell in, though not so good as the grammar of the scriptures. When we have a free use of reason, we find a good help in books; in youth, because we have no experience, we are more prone to thoughts of atheism; therefore, says Solomon, Eccles. xii. 1, ‘Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.’ But excellent arguments for conviction may be drawn hence, when we have higher knowledge.

2. Because these objects are familiar and frequent. *Homini ingenitum est magis nova, quam magna mirari.* This is the wretched disposition of man, to admire things that are new, rather than things that are great. We give money to see strange beasts; you may think with yourselves, when you see people pressing to see a new sight, there is a greater miracle every day; we are injurious to God, when we do not glorify him in his creatures, when we do carelessly pass by such goodly works.

3. This proceeds from laziness. It is easier to read a chapter in the word, than the book of the creatures, the act is more outward and corporeal, the other putteth us to the pains and trouble of discourse: there is no duty so spiritual as meditation, therefore we withdraw the shoulder. Though this was pleasant to David, Ps. civ. 34, ‘My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.’

4. From worldliness. Our heads and hearts are so taken up about our own work, that we have little leisure to mind God’s; like a company of ants, we crawl up and down, and do not regard the great things about us.

Here I shall—(1.) Lay down motives to quicken us to this necessary work of reflecting upon the creation of the world, that was made by the power of God out of nothing. (2.) Offer directions how to reflect upon the creature with comfort and profit.

First, for the motives.

1. The creatures are apt to teach us. All the creatures of God, they have a voice, and read a lecture to us of the glory of the divinity. The first bible was the book of nature; God spake to the world, not by words, but by things, and taught men by what he had written of his glory upon the creation. As many creatures as there are, so many letters there are, out of which we may spell God; the book is written within with glorious angels, and without with corporeal substances that discover the glory of God; it may teach us unspeakable wisdom, unmeasurable goodness, infinite power. The world is a book, God’s power was the hand with which it was written, and his wisdom was the pen, and the letters are the creatures; some are lesser letters, some greater, but out of the whole there is a volume of praise to the creator. Nay, the world is not only a book, but a teacher; not only a dead letter, but a living voice: Ps. xix. 1, ‘The heavens declare the glory

of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.' Lesser creatures have a voice to proclaim the excellency of their creator. An ant and a gnat may take the pulpit, and preach a God to us. 'Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world,' saith the psalmist, ver. 4. We should so hearken to the creature, as if we did hear God himself speak to us; 'and day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge,' ver. 2. Other preachers are soon spent and tired, but the creatures are constant preachers, always calling upon us night and day to mind God; and, ver. 3, 'There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.' Though the languages of all nations scattered over the world be very different, yet there is one book may be read in every country; the heavens speak Greek to the Grecians; they speak English to us; so many creatures, so many preachers there are of God's wisdom, power, and goodness. Nay, the creature that seems most gross, the dull earth, the heaviest and grossest element, and the mute fishes, proclaim God: Job xii, 8, 'Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.' Though the fishes have no sound, cannot make so much as a rude noise, though they have no voice, yet they are able to preach God unto us, and teach us, that there is a sovereign providence by which all things are guided and governed.

2. God hath made man fit to learn, he hath given us faculties to this purpose, that we may understand the creatures: Eccles. iii. 11, 'He hath set the world in their heart.' The great work of God's Spirit is to pluck the world out of our hearts; what is the meaning then of it? He hath not only given us the creature to contemplate, but an ability, an earnest desire, to search into the secrets of nature, that we may understand the voice of the creation. Men are the most considerable, and the most considering part of the world. The creatures praise God, that is, they offer matter of praise: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee;' they are as a well-tuned harp, but man maketh the music. We should not be silent, when the creatures proclaim their creator. Man is made to consider all the rest of the creatures, therefore is placed in the middle of the world, that he may look round about him. Man hath reason given him; and shall man that hath reason make no more use of the stars than the creatures do, only to see by them? Man is to discourse of them. He hath given us a body bored through with five senses to let out thoughts, and to take in objects; to taste the goodness of God in the creatures, and see divinity in them, and hear the voice by which they proclaim the glory of God. A philosopher, being asked, why he had eyes? answered, *Ut miracula Dei contempler.* Creatures are mutes, when neglected, and vowels, when we consider them.

3. God himself delights in the view of his own works. God observed every day's work, and said, it was good; he took a complacency in it: Prov. viii. 30, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.' Ps. civ. 31, 'The Lord rejoiceth in his works:' God rejoiceth in the view of his own works; therefore there is great reason for us to study and contemplate them.

4. This was God's great aim and end in making man, that he

might have a witness and publisher of his own glory. That this was the aim of God, to have his works viewed distinctly, may be discovered by many things; that he did prolong his work for six days, when he might have made all things in one day. And this was the reason why he made man last, that when he was made he might contemplate all the rest of the creatures. *Deus te quasi testem, laudatoremque tanti operis sui in hunc mundum induxit,* Lactantius. When God had made the whole world, there wanted one to be a witness of the work, one to admire the greatness and goodness of it, therefore man is brought into the world for this purpose; when God's feast was prepared, then man was invited to come and taste. The first sabbath was appointed for contemplation; it is the sweetest rest that we can enjoy, to view the works of God. Now consider what an injury and unthankfulness will this be to God, to cross the aim of the creation, and to pass by such a goodly frame with a careless eye. If a father should build a great house or palace for his son, and he should not so much as deign to look upon it, what an ingratitude would this be! So when God hath furnished his palace with such variety of all creatures, then not to consider and regard the operation of his hands, what an unkind return would this be! If you should make a sumptuous feast, and your guests will not so much as look upon your table, you would count this a great affront; so this is a great affront to the divine majesty, not to look upon his works, since the beauty and order of the creation is a feast for the mind. The world is not only the house of man, but the temple of God. Many came to see Solomon's temple from afar, and many go to Jerusalem to see the temple of the sepulchre; you need not go so far. When the ethnics slandered the primitive christians, that they had no temple, they answered, *Dei templum esse universum hoc quod cernitur*—this world that we behold is God's temple.

5. The creatures signify nothing to us, if we do not consider them; without meditation we receive no good: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works praise thee.' The creatures are as a well-tuned instrument, but it is man that must make the music. The creatures, if they be not regarded, are but mutes, they make no sound. There we read the beauty, wisdom, and majesty of God: Job xii. 7, 'Ask now of the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.' Ask the creatures questions. Though the creatures have neither voice nor ears, yet we may consult and confer with them; when we think of them, they answer and resolve the questions put to them, though not to the ear, yet to the conscience. Ask the creatures, Is there a God? they answer, Yea. What kind of God is he? they will answer, A wise, powerful, and good God. By meditation we may easily make out these collections. It is great unthankfulness, that the creatures should proclaim the glory of God to no purpose; that we should be silent when the creatures speak. Christ said, the stones would cry if these should hold their peace. Shall the heavens declare the works of God, and shall man regard them not? Shall we be deaf, when the creatures don't cease to cry to us.

6. It is a duty that lies upon all reasonable creatures. (1.) The angels delight in this work; Job xxxviii. 7, it is said, when the earth was

founded, ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ;’ that is, when God first laid the foundations of the heavens, the angels, like birds at the break of day, welcome the dawning of the creation and the first appearances of the love of God to the creature, and still they are praising God for his essence and works. It cannot literally and properly be understood. There is but one morning star, not many ; the stars were not created when the foundations of the earth were laid, not till the fourth day, Gen. i. 16. The angels are as it were spiritual stars. God is the sun and angels the stars. God is the Father of lights, and those angels are the stars derived from God. (2.) The saints of God, they make it their work. Much of the scripture is spent in this purpose. The whole book of Job is interspersed with several passages, chap. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. David is a professed student in the works of God ; many psalms are composed to give God the glory of the creation—Ps. viii. and xix., civ., cvi., and cxlvii. Meditation is the most spiritual part of worship, therefore to the children of God it is wondrous sweet. It is true Christ crucified is a chief object, Ephes. iii. 10, but the world created must have a room and place. (3.) The heathens by the light of nature acknowledge it to be their duty. I might produce many instances ; Tully saith, *Animarum, ingeniorumque naturale quoddam pabulum est contemplatio, consideratioque naturae* : consideration of nature is the food of the soul, the solace and refreshment of the rational soul. Another saith, *Θεατὴς ἐγένετο τῶν ἐργῶν Θεοῦ ὁ ἀνθρωπος* ; the world is a great theatre wherein the creation is acted and drawn forth ; God is the author, and man is made to be the spectator. Another said, *Os hominum sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri jussit*—God has given man an erect countenance, that he might look up to heaven. Anaxagoras being asked, why he was born ? answered, *Eis θεωρίαν ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ οὐρανοῦ*—For contemplation of sun, moon and heavens. The sun, moon, and stars are the natural apostles ; though they cannot preach Christ, yet they preach God. Heathens must be called to account at the last day for not reading the book of nature : ‘He left not himself without a witness,’ Acts xiv. 17 ; and the apostle tells heathens, when justice shall make a solemn triumph, Acts xvii. 31, ‘He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.’ What will become of us, that have not only the book of nature, but the comment of scripture ? God hath unfolded the meaning of the creature in the word. We shall have many witnesses against us at the day of the Lord.

7. It is a work that is of great profit ; partly to heighten fancy, and make it fit for meditation. Many find meditation a burden because of the barrenness and leanness that is in their understandings. Oh ! practise upon the creation, and you will find fancy to be much elevated and raised. Anthony the devout hermit, that is so much spoken of in ecclesiastical story, being asked, how he could profit in knowledge, and spend his days in the desert without men and books ? answered, I have one book I am always studying, and turning over day and night ; and so I find my hours to be both pleasant and profitable ; and it consists of three leaves and three letters ; the three leaves of it are the heavens, the earth, and the waters. The letters are the inhabitants of these houses. If you look into the heavens, there are stars, and angels, and

fowls ; if you walk on the earth, there are living creatures, and chiefly man, if you look into the seas, there are fishes. Partly because you will hereby have an excellent advantage to know God, and keep God present in your thoughts. Man is much led by sense ; in the benefit of fruitful seasons, and temperament of the heavens, and plenty of fruits of the earth, you may be reading the goodness of God ; in thunders, lightnings, tempests, earthquakes, hail, snow, pestilence, comets, you may read the majesty and the terrors of the Lord ; in the guidance of the world, and measure of the stars, and all created beings, you may observe the wisdom of God ; so that religion is as it were made sensible. And partly, you will have this profit, a sweet opportunity to compare the old and the new creation together. Eph. ii. 10, We are said to be 'the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus to good works.' The old world and the new heart, they are both God's work : Eph. iv. 24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' There you may see beauty and order brought out of nothing. Every man is a lesser world, a model of the universe ; the globe in the head, the sun and moon in the eyes ; there is the liver like the ocean, which receiveth all the lesser streams, conveyed by the channels of the veins. But now a new man is a new creature, a new world ; instead of the sun that shines in the firmament, there is the sun of righteousness, the ebbings and flowings of the influences of grace, the air which we receive by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and blow out again in prayers ; there is the fire, by which the Holy Ghost warmeth and inflameth the heart. Many such sweet resemblances might be made.

8. If there were no profit, yet it is a matter of much spiritual delight to reflect upon the creature. Man is a creature taken with variety and beauty. Now what prospect is more various and beautiful than the works of God ? when we are weary of one object we may go to another. Uncloset the book of nature, turn over a few leaves of that large volume, see what delight and contentment reason will find ; when we walk abroad, these meditations will be best company for us. Look upon the spangled firmament, bestudded everywhere with stars, like so many golden nails fixed and struck into it, or like so many little holes in a thick covering, disclosing the beauty and glory that is within. There you may see the sun like a giant rejoicing to run his course, or like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. There are the influences of the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion ; there is Mazzaroth in his season, and Arcturus with his sons. There the moon like a rich diamond shines out with a foil of darkness and blackness, to set forth the lustre of it ; and the constellations are as so many several families of stars ; all which may ravish us with delight and wonder. If you come lower, consider the fire that burns not, the treasures of snow and hail, meteors as much feared as wondered at. There are the clouds, which Job calls the bottles of God, which, like so many tankard-bearers, convey their influences to all the houses of the earth, or like water-pots, refresh the garden of the world. Come we lower, and there is the earth interlaid with water, enamelled and decked with flowers and grass, variety of beasts in the field, and plentiful fruits of the land. And in the sea, as the papists say of Aquinas, *quot articulos, tot miracula* ; so many fishes, so many

wonders ! the number, vastness, motion, perfection of all these do loudly proclaim the praise of God. Look upon yourselves, what delight is it to contemplate our own nature ! Our generation is wonderful ; we are poured out as milk into the womb, curdled like cheese, fenced with skin and bones. In the body there is an admirable structure, all the members conspiring to the beauty, decency, and use of the whole : Ps. cxxxix. 14, ‘I am fearfully and wonderfully made.’ Then if we look upon the soul, there is a sparkle of the divinity, and beam of God. Who can trace the flights and workings of reason, and the several traverses of the spirit of a man ? Look on the lesser, the most inconsiderable creatures. Pauses in music serve to make harmony, as well as the more perfect notes. Austin in some respects preferred a gnat before the sun, to see a little animated dust move up and down in such regular motions, with such handsomeness of body, eyes, feet, and wings ; it mightily delights and sets out the glory of God.

SERMON VIII.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

Secondly, I come to give you some directions how to reflect upon the creatures with comfort and profit.

1. Be much in occasional meditation. There is nothing within the whole circumference of nature but will give matter to you. The creatures that are all round about you, are as the phylacteries that were worn under the law ; the Jews were to have ‘fringes on the borders of their garments, that they may look upon them, and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them,’ Numb. xv. 38, 39. The creatures are as it were those fringes and borders, that wherever we turn our eyes, we may read God in the creature. Therefore when you are walking in the fields, or going to your country-houses, consider the works of the Lord ; look round about upon the beautiful frame before your eyes ; do but consider what a rich canopy God hath stretched out over your heads ; you should be full of good highway thoughts, Luke xxiv. 17; Christ inquires after their highway speeches ; ‘What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk ?’ So the Lord looks after your highway thoughts. When you see the sun glittering and shining forth in his beams like a bridegroom newly dressed, you should be then forming of some thoughts of the excellency and glory of God, who is the maker of it. When you pass by the sea, consider the immensity and dreadfulness of God by the horror of the waves and his wonderful works : Ps. cvii. 23, 24, ‘They that go down into the sea, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.’ When you are cast upon storms and tempests, remember by whose breath all these are blown. When you hear the thunder, this is the

voice of the Lord ; look upon it as a trumpet the Lord hath sounded to call the world together to a dread and reverence of his majesty. There are day thoughts, and there are night thoughts ; David had his day meditation, and his night meditation ; the 19th psalm seems to be penned in the day, for there he speaks only of the sun ; when David in the morning saw the sun breaking out, and enlightening the world, then he thinks of the glory of God. And the 8th psalm was a night meditation : ‘Lord, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars that thou hast ordained, what is man !’ It is probable that meditation was in the night, because he doth not mention the sun, but the moon and stars.

2. There must be also set and solemn meditation upon special occasions. Set meditation brings in profit to the soul. Passant and transient thoughts are more pleasant, but not so profitable. Meditation that is deliberate, is of most use. Usually sudden thoughts pass away from us, and do not return with such advantage ; as children shoot away their arrows at rovers, and do not look after them ; or as a ball stricken in the open field goes out from us but a ball stricken against a wall doth return to our hand again ; so those passant thoughts go away from us ; but when there is a fixed mark, some bound set, those thoughts return to our hand again with much comfort and spiritual advantage ; when we aim at some particular thing and fix our mark, our thoughts return with advantage. Scattered rays heat, but burn not. When the beams of the sun are contracted in a burning-glass, a narrow place, then they fire ; so when our thoughts are more particular and set, then they warm the heart, and return to us with advantage. There are several special occasions when we should propose to ourselves the thoughts of the creation.

[1.] When we are not affected with the majesty and glory of God. Usually we are moved more with God’s benefits than with his glorious essence. This is our infirmity ; we should rise up to such a height as this, to love God as he is, *diligibilis natura*, lovely in himself, all self-respects secluded and laid aside. This is pure love without self-love, when we can love God, and respect God for the greatness and glory of his essence, though there were no influences and comfort going out from him to the creature ; for then he is honoured as the chiefest good, and the utmost end. But how should we get our hearts affected with God’s glorious essence ? Study the perfections of God in the creation, that you may not only love him for his influences of mercy, but reverence him for his majesty and glory : Ps. civ. 1, ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul : O Lord my God, thou art very great.’ David would praise and bless God for his greatness ; how doth he do it ? he spends his thoughts upon the creation throughout the psalm.

[2.] When you are haunted with thoughts of atheism. The best of God’s children are sometimes tried and exercised in the sorest way, and we are apt to doubt sometimes of the supreme truth, whether there be a God or no ? Now if your hearts make any question of it, go ask of the creature, as Job saith, ‘ Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee : or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee ;’ nay he sends them to the fishes, that are mute and make no noise,—‘ And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto

thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this ? Job xii. 7-9. The world could not make itself ; that which is supported by another must needs be framed by another. Now the creatures hanging upon God as a garment upon a nail ; take away the nail, the garment falls down ; they all proclaim they have an excellent, powerful, and a wise creator. If you see a great house, and nothing in it but mice and vermin, you conclude, surely the mice could not frame such a glorious palace, neither could the pieces come together by chance. As the letters of Homer's poem could not come together by chance ; so survey the creation, all these things could not come together by chance, they must be made by something ; the very heathens could argue thus.

[3.] When you doubt of the promises of God, because there are appearances to the contrary. When you look for trouble think of the creation, that you may trust in the power of God when you see no means. Tully brings an Epicurean disputing thus against the creation : If the world were created, where are the tools and instruments ? where are the workmen employed in so great a work as this is ? and because these could not be assigned, he concludes such a thing could never be, but all things came together by chance. So we say, If the Lord means to bless us and do us good, where are the instruments ? and where is the appearance of any probability in the course of second causes ? 'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath,' saith the prophet, Isa. li. 6 ; from whence came all this excellent harmony that is in the parts of the creation ? So Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.' God sends his prophet with glad tidings to afflicted Israel ; ay, but where is the comforter ? we are under sorrows and bondage. Consider who made the heavens, ver. 12, 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ?' See he produceth the works of the creation for their encouragement. So David, Ps. cxxiv. 8, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth ;' that is, as long as I see such a glorious fabric before mine eyes, heaven and earth made out of nothing, I will never doubt and distrust God.

[4.] When your hearts faint in regard of outward supplies and temporal provision, survey the creatures. Who is it that feeds the beasts of the earth, and makes some of the fowl fattest in winter when provisions are scarcest ? At whose charge are all the fish of the sea and the beasts of the forest maintained ? Who spreads a table for all creatures ? The world is but God's great common ; he is landlord, he looks after all his creatures, that they be all supplied : Mat. vi. 25, 'Take no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on ; is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ?' As if he had said, God that gave you life out of nothing, certainly he will give you food ; and he that gave you a body, he will provide for you raiment. And Christ sends us to the creation, ver. 26, 'Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them ; are ye not much better than they ?' So David, Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'

[5.] Greaten the privileges of your covenant interest. Now if you would know what it is to have God for your God in covenant, consider the creation, the work of his hand ; the mighty power of that God that made the world is made over to you in the covenant of grace. See Jonah i. 9, ‘I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which made the sea, and the dry land.’ You have the creator to provide for you : 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ‘All things are yours, for you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’ Thou hast God himself, and he hath all creatures at his command and beck, and by possessing God, who is all in all, we possess all things. This will help us to enlarge our thoughts according to the extent of the covenant.

3. There are proper objects for God’s several and special excellences. Because one creature could not represent the infinite perfection of God, therefore he hath multiplied them, and given to every one some special property, whereby he may be known and discovered. For instance, if you would meditate of God’s purity and holiness among the creatures you must single out the light, which of all qualities is most pure ; though it pass through the most impure places, it is not tainted ; it is some resemblance of the holiness of God : 1 John i. 5, ‘God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.’ Look upon the sun, by that means you may the better consider the purity and holiness of God ; the sun is but as the black and sultry bottom of a caldron in regard of God. So for God’s immensity and greatness, pitch upon the vastness of the firmament, or the sea, or upon any other immense or great body. Of the vast magnitude and huge extension of the firmament, how many millions of miles do the stars take up in their tract and course ? Astronomers reckon two hundred thirty-nine thousand miles ; what is this to God ? 1 Kings viii. 27, ‘The heaven of heavens cannot contain him.’ Isa. xl. 12, ‘He hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span,’ &c. The sun is reckoned to be a hundred and sixty-six times bigger than the earth ; what is this to God ? The psalmist speaks of the ‘great and wide sea,’ Ps. civ. 25. Man cannot think of such a vast body as the sea without some religious horror and dread of God : it represents to us the infiniteness of God. So for the power of God, think of his upholding the earth ; there is the great instance of God’s power, that so vast a weight as the body of the earth and waters is together should hang in the thin air, which of itself will not so much as sustain a tennis ball or feather, yet this is the only supporter of the earth and the waters ; the immovable dwelling-place of all the living creatures is hung upon nothing but upon the air. Sometimes it is said that the earth is founded upon the waters, as Ps. xxiv. 2, ‘He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods ;’ at other times, as Job xxvi. 7, ‘He hangeth the earth upon nothing.’ This great weight, it hangs merely upon the power of God, and therefore this discovers the greatness of the creator. So in bridling the sea, Job xxxvii. 10, ‘The breadth of the waters is straitened.’ God handles it as a nurse her babe, who turns and sways the child by the fire ; so doth God with the sea : Job xxxviii. 8, 9, ‘Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb ? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it.’

If you would meditate upon the faithfulness of God, you cannot have a better object than the constant course of the heavens and recourse of the seasons; they still remain as they were from the beginning of the world, and so they will continue: Ps. cxix. 90, 91, 'Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy servants.' Ps. lxxxii. 9, 'Thy faithfulness wilt thou establish in the very heavens;' that is, in the constant motions and courses of the stars in the heavens, God hath given the world a document of his truth and faithfulness. How many thousand years hath the sun kept his course without errors and alterations? So constant are the courses of the heavens, that astronomers are able for a great while before to tell when an eclipse shall be to an hour and minute. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. 'Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun to be a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars, for a light by night; which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.' If you would think of the wisdom of God, then think upon the multitude of creatures that are in the world, yet they are all marshalled and guided in their order and course; such an innumerable company of creatures kept like a well-ordered army without any rout or confusion. Ps. cxlviii. 6, 'He hath established them for ever, he hath made a decree which shall not pass.' All the creatures, though so many, they keep their path and their course, and God wisely orders all for the service of the whole; and that discovers the wisdom of God. So for the unweariedness of his mercy and bounty; the stars go long journeys, yet are never tired, but continue their beneficent influences: Job xxxviii. 31, 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?' The sun riseth fresh every morning to communicate its influences; so the compassions of God come in fresh every morning: Lam. iii. 22, 23, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.'

4. Above all things meditate much upon the heavens, and upon man. Upon the heavens, that you may know God; upon man, that you may know yourselves. The smallest things are of use and profit. Christ takes notice of the lilies of the field in Mat. vi. 28, 29, the beauty nature hath bestowed upon the lilies; 'so that Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like one of them; but now the heavens and man are the chiefest objects. The heavens are God's dwelling-place, and man is God's image; therefore here are the chiefest representations of the deity and godhead.

[1.] Look up to the heavens; there is God's royal house and pavilion, and a lively character of the divine perfections. Job and David were great students in the heavens: Ps. xix. 1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork.' Some of the heathens made gods of the sun and stars for their glory and beauty. And indeed the Lord speaks to his own people, as if they were in danger, being such glorious bodies, and lively representations of the divine glory: Deut. iv. 19, 'Take heed, saith God, lest thou lift up thine eyes

to heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them.' The sun is a representative of God, so the psalmist sets him out, Ps. xix. There is the omnipresence of the sun, ver. 6, 'His going out is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it.' The omnisciency and omni-efficiency of it, 'nothing is hid from the heat thereof ;' the sun is *totus Oculus*, one broad eye that looks over all the world. So is God, 'all things are naked and open to him,' Heb. iv. 13 ; and his virtue reacheth to the smallest creatures. I have heard of a philosopher that would lie upon his back all the day, to look upon the beauty of the sun. Certainly we may stand gazing and admiring the heavens, and, oh, how many sweet thoughts might it occasion of the majesty of God, and the glory of the everlasting state ! This is but the canopy, but the outward veil, and the covering of the beauty and glory that is within ; it is but the outside of the heavenly palace where we shall reign with Christ for ever. There are some have gathered all divinity out of the heavens. There is but one heaven and one sun, to teach us there is but one God. The properties of heaven, motion, light and heat, are some kind of resemblance of the mysterious trinity. The vast extension of the heavens shows the infiniteness of God ; the thinness of the air shows the spiritual essence of God ; the incorruptibility of the heavens shows the immortality and immutability of God ; the influences of the heavens discover the sweet emanations of the divine goodness ; the order of heaven, God's wisdom ; the brightness of heaven, the majesty of God ; the purity of heaven, the holiness of God ; the subtilty and thinness of heaven, the simplicity of God ; and the spheric form of the heaven discovers to us the eternity of God, without beginning and without end. The heavens are the natural catechism out of which you may read all points that are not mysterious, and do not depend merely upon revelation.

[2.] Think upon man. Man is not only the creature of God, but the image of God. One calls man the masterpiece of nature ; it is good to consider ourselves ; there is nothing nearer to ourselves than ourselves. Man, as he is the image of God, so he is the image of the world, the short draft and model of all the rest of the world. Look upon soul and body, all is full of wonders. In the body to consider the excellent symmetry and proportion of all the parts, how the joints and muscles are ordered for the service and beauty of the whole frame, the outward shape and the inward motion full of wonder. Oh, how excellent a painter is the creator, that can draw such an image out of the dust, and scarce two men alike in face ! to see so many millions in the world, and everyone known from the other by some notable mark of difference in the face ; yet the outward part is nothing to the inward parts. It is reported of Galen, that great physician, when he was cutting up a man, and saw the wise disposing of all the entrails, certainly, says he, He that made man doth not require the sacrifice of beasts, but only to admire his wisdom, goodness, and power. The psalmist saith : Ps. cxxxix. 14, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' There is much of God in our very bodies. You will say, our bodies we have them from our parents ; no, you shall see all we had from our parents was but a title to the first Adam's guilt and sin, and a pledge

of misery and of our everlasting unhappiness; we have nothing else. Our parents of themselves could not form such an excellent body; therefore not only the soul but the body is of God; they are but lower servants, God himself was the architect, the wise builder. If thy parents could form thy body, then they could tell how many muscles there are, and how they are placed in the body, how many veins and sinews, how many bones greater and lesser; but they know not, it is a thing of chance to their work, therefore it is the exact composure of God. Besides, if thy parents could make thy body, then they could repair it when it is wounded, and restore it when sick. He that makes a watch can mend it when it is broken and discomposed. It is God alone that made it. Then for the soul, there is the chief part of man. There is nothing nearer to God than the soul but only the angels, therefore we can hardly know him by the creature without considering our own souls. This leaves man without excuse; he had a rational soul to know his creator. Thy soul is a spirit as God is, in the same rank of being. The sun is not a spirit. Those glorious bodies that shine in the heavens, they are not advanced to the nobleness with thy soul. Then thy soul is invisible as God is; you may as well deny your own soul as deny God is because he cannot be seen. Thy soul is immortal and incorruptible, as God is. In the very essence of thy soul there is much of God to be seen, in the operations of the soul, it is in every part of the body; *tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte*; all in all parts, and all in the whole; so God fills all the world, for he is everywhere, and yet nowhere in a sense. When a member is withered or cut off, the soul suffers no loss: so the Lord in all the changes of the world suffers nothing; sometimes he lets out his goodness in the creature, and sometimes the creature is destroyed, yet there is no alteration in God. And then who can trace the several traverses and flights of reason? The soul cannot only hear, see, smell, and taste, but it can discourse also of things invisible, the essence of God and angels. If there were nothing to discover God in your souls, and the impressions of God upon your souls, yet the several arts and crafts that are abroad in the world, (these inventions are common, therefore less observed), how could these things be found out? they display the wisdom of God. For to instance in common things: in the craft of husbandry, who doth not admire to see the various inventions in husbandry and gardening, in ordering the corn and fruits of the earth, Isa. xxviii. from ver. 24 to the end? He concludes all, ver. 29, 'This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts.' And so for the smith's craft: Isa. liv. 16, 'I have created the smith that bloweth the coals,' &c. It is God that teacheth to cast iron into various shapes and figures. The inventors of arts among the heathens they counted gods. It is God teacheth men curious inventions. It is true, other creatures have their arts, but nothing like man. The birds curiously build their nests, the foxes dig their holes, and the little spider can make a curious web to catch flies, but they do these things by instinct of nature, and therefore do them always in one and the same manner; but the arts of man are various and innumerable. Nothing can escape that which the wit of man cannot take, neither birds by their flight, nor beasts with their greatness, nor fishes in the depth of the water: James iii. 7,

'For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.' Man is able to tame all beasts, to bring them to his own use and purpose; but God made them. In the art of navigation consider the wonders of the Lord; that such great vast burdens should dance upon the tops of the water, that ships should as it were fly with sails as with wings, and run with oars as with feet. And then in painting and architecture much of the wisdom of God is seen. Oh, consider and use this as an argument to set out the glory of God. Man can build houses, but God built heaven and earth. The painter is able to paint with colours; but admire him that could paint so fairly that had no other pencil but his hand, and no other paint but a little dirt.

5. You must not only consider what is made, but to what end. In the works themselves we may consider God's power and wisdom; but in the end we may consider God's goodness, and our own duty. Now the ends of the creation were many, chiefly these three; man's good, the creator's praise, the glory of Jesus Christ.

[1.] When thou art thinking of the creation, consider, all this was made for man's good. The whole world is but the great house and palace of little man. Oh, how great is the goodness of God to sorry man! whole nature is but his servant. The angels were made for man: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Those courtiers of heaven, those masterpieces of the creation are man's servants. The stars were made to give us light and heat, to cherish man and to cherish the earth; and the waters were made for man's good. The whole earth is but man's garden; the plants of it for our use for meat and medicine; the beasts for our food and clothing; nay in the bowels of the earth there are laid up veins of treasure to maintain commerce between nation and nation; though men be scattered in the several climates of the world, yet God will bring them together by traffic. Nay, all sublunary things were not only created for man's use, but most of them subjected to man's dominion. See the charter, all is made over to us: Gen. i. 28, 29, 'Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.' They all serve for the uses of man, and are made over to him. It is true, the heavens are for the use of man, but they are not under the dominion of man; that is reserved to God alone; therefore it is said: Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth he hath given to the children of men.' But though the heavens be the Lord's, that is, reserved in his power, yet they serve for the use of man. The air serves to give man breath; the firmament serves to give man light and heat; and the heaven of heavens serves for his eternal and blessed habitation. Oh, the goodness of God to man! 'Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!' How may we break out into such a holy wonder and admiration!

[2.] They were made for God's glory: Rom. xi. 36, 'All things,' saith the apostle, 'are of him, and through him, and to him.' 'of him'

in creation ; ‘through him’ in the sustentation of his providence ; and ‘to him,’ that is, for the uses and purposes of his glory ; all things return to the womb of their original, out of which they once came. The Lord deals with us just as Potiphar dealt with Joseph, he gave him power over all things, but only his wife, that he kept to himself; therefore by way of meditation we may reason as Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 8, 9, ‘Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house : and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept any thing back from me but thee, because thou art his wife : how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?’ So do you reason with yourself ; Oh, I have a bounteous creator, God hath given me all things, for my use and comfort, and all the articles of the lease and grant are only that I should serve his glory ! Oh, let me not rob him of that ; let me enjoy the creature, but give God the glory ; let me not pervert the end of my creation ; all should be to his praise. All the creatures do as it were proclaim to us, Man ! glorify thy creator ; God hath given us to thee to serve thee, that thou mightest serve him ; we die for thy good and support, that thou mayest live ; we are ready to fall down and perish for thy food. Oh, therefore be thou contented to suffer any inconvenience, if it be the loss of life, that the glory of God may live. We will give thee food, meat, nourishment, all that thou requirest, if thou wouldest love him, and praise him, and live to the glory of God. Saith the sun, I will give thee light and continued influences and rays every morning, if thou wilt but glorify thy creator. It is said : Prov. xvi. 4, ‘The Lord hath made all things for himself.’ In a sort we may say, God made all things for man, and man for himself ; it follows, ‘and the wicked for the day of evil.’

[3.] Therefore doth he create the world to make a fair way for Jesus Christ, Col. i. 15. The apostle proves the godhead of Christ by this argument : ‘He is the firstborn of every creature ; for by him all things were created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him.’ Creation is but one step to the execution and advancement of God’s decrees. We were first made that we might afterwards be redeemed. Christ gave us our lives at first, and afterwards he saved our lives. First he created us, and then prevented our execution. The world was but one step to heaven. First he gives thee thyself, then all things in the world, then he would give thee himself. The angels were made ministering spirits, and the Son of God was made a servant for thy sake. Oh, the wonderful love of God ! When he founded the world, then he prepared heaven for thee that art a member of Christ. All was in a subordination to his wise decrees.

6. We should specially meditate upon the goodness and beneficence of God. When we taste the sweetness of the creatures, then is a special time of devising arguments of praise and studying thanks. It is said, Acts xiv. 17, ‘Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’ Mark, this was God’s testimony to the gentiles ; this preached God to them. Oh, therefore lift

up a solemn thought on these occasions. In the spring-time, when nature is in its pride, think who it is that milketh out the fruits of the earth, that ripeneth the apples on the tree, that seasons the grass, and makes it fit for food for the beasts. Or else when you have had any liberal or comfortable use of the creature, then the heart should be raised up to God. Usually when God remembers us most, and we abound in creature comforts, we forget God and slight the creator. Oh! remember this is to despise God in the day of his magnificence. Look, as when Vashti refused to come, when the king was minded to show himself to his nobles, it is said, Esther i. 12, ‘The king was very wroth, and his anger burned in him;’ so here, the lord sends to invite thy soul to come to him in the spring-time, in the time of gladness of heart; when you abound in comforts, he sends these messengers that thou mightest come and solace thyself with him. Should we not come then, his anger would be raised; especially when we abuse the creatures to riot, and our abundance to vanity and excess; consider what an injury this is to God, to abuse that which he hath made. If we have made any thing, and another come and scorn and abuse it, it enrageth us: consider what it is to abuse the workmanship of God.

SERMON IX.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear—HEB. xi. 3.

7. COME not off from any meditation, till you have found some sensible profit. I will show you what are the usual fruits of solemn and serious thoughts of the creation. If your thoughts be serious, thus it will be:—

[1.] There will be a greater disposition and aptness to praise the Lord. If you have meditated aright the heart will be more affected with the lustre of his glory shining forth in the creature: Rev. iv. 11, ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ Cold and dead thoughts vanish without use and profit. When you think of the creation aright, there will be found in you dispositions to praise God that he should devise all this for man. Who can touch the harp of the creatures without being ravished with the music? who can read that book that is framed with such excellent art, and not commend the author? who can hear the creatures preach a sermon, and not say, Blessed be the God that made them?

[2.] The soul will be raised into some wonder and admiration at the goodness and wisdom of God. Pythagoras boasted he had gotten this advantage by philosophy, *Nihil admirari*, to wonder at nothing; but certainly when we survey the works of God, we cannot choose but wonder at all things. This is the least respect you owe God to wonder at

his works ; and till your hearts be thus heightened, your thoughts have not been ponderous and serious, nor sufficiently exercised. It is very observable the children of God never come off from the meditation of his works without admiration : Ps. viii. 3, 4, ' When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ! and the son of man that thou visitest him ! ' So Ps. civ. 24, there is another meditation of the creation, and see how he concludes : ' O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches.' We are apt to wonder at the workmanship of man ; at a curious picture, or at a building fairly contrived, we wonder at the skill and art of the workman. Certainly you set God much below a painter and a carver, when you can look upon this goodly frame of the world, and never wonder at it. Consider, you never rightly glorify and praise him till there be admiration. Admiration is that operation of the understanding by which it is carried out to objects above its reach and perception. Wonder seizeth upon you either by new things, or by miraculous things. You cannot tell how to comprehend strange things, they do for a while suspend the act ; but things that are wonderful indeed, and which after contemplation and search we cannot apprehend and find out to their perfection, they wholly astonish and overwhelm the faculty. Now such are the works of the Lord ; upon an intimate contemplation of them we shall find them above the reach of our understanding, and we can only say, ' O Lord how wonderful are thy works ! ' Till there be this admiration, the affections are not proportionably lifted up to the object. There is no object within the whole circumference of nature but, so far as we discern God in it, will raise our wonder.

[3.] If you meditate aright, the heart will be more drawn off from the creature to God. This is the main end either of making the creature, or of meditating upon the creature. Of making the creature: Acts xvii. 26, 27, ' He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.' We are apt to stay in the creature, and forget the creator ; this is quite contrary to the end of God, they are to show us how good and how sweet the Lord is. This was the reason why God made the world, and filled it with inhabitants, that the world might wonder at him ; but we doat upon shadows, and leave the substance. This is as if a mighty emperor should gather all his nobles together, that they might come and admire his royalty ; and when they come, they turn their back and admire his picture and shadow. Consider, all the creatures are but rude adumbrations or shadows of the glory of God, to help the memory ; but they must not intercept the affection, and forestall the heart. Should we be so foolish as go to the shadows, those obscure resemblances, and leave the creature that is so full of majesty and glory ? Would we be contented with a painted horse for our use, or painted bread for our food ? Why are we then contented with those shadows of God ? Meditation is nothing but a parley and discourse with the creature about the chiefest good. Job makes hue and cry after wisdom, Where

is the chiefest good? Is it in the earth? no, that is too gross. Is it in heaven? no, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. Is it in the depth? no, he is a greater depth than can be fathomed. What is the husk of the creature to the bread of eternal life? what are the drossy shadows and obscure resemblances to God, who is the substance himself?

[4.] If you have rightly meditated upon the works of creation, there will be more fear and dread of God, that will arise from the consideration of his majesty and power impressed upon the creature. When we look upon God in his works we see him in his royalty, therefore there must needs be a great deal of fear upon the heart: Jer. v. 22, 'Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?' Mark, he calls for fear, because he hath made the creature, and hath ordered all things with such exact wisdom. Who can think of the dreadful waves that are bound up by God, and not have some horror upon his heart? They that do not thus discourse upon his works, God saith, they are brutish: ver. 24, 'And say not in their hearts, Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and latter in its season.' Oh, when we come to take abroad God's greatness and excellency, how can we but dread and reverence him?

[5.] If you meditate rightly upon the workmanship of God, there will be more love to God for all his kindness, and for all those effusions and communications of his goodness to the creature. Here we come to see how much we are bound to God. Usually we are far more affected with what man doth for us, than with what God doth for us; as, for instance, we love him that helps us and delivers us out of straits; but we do not love him that made us out of nothing; this seems nothing to us. Every petty courtesy obligeth us to men, and we do not consider we owe all to God, life, breath, and being, and all. If man should do half so much for us, how are we obliged to him? God hath done incomparably more, and we do not esteem it. What is the reason? is it this, man's courtesy seems more, because his abilities are less? or is it because he gives from himself? how poor is this! Doth water lose its nature, because it is in the sea, and not in the bucket and cistern? Are God's benefits the worse because he is the author, whose nature it is to do good? Consider, waters are sweeter in the fountain than in the rivers. There is more condescension in God than in man. When man loves us, he does but love his equal, and draws out his bowels to his own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7. Consider, the earth is full of the riches of his goodness, therefore love the creator.

Another fruit of meditating upon the works of God will be obedience. Oh, what an interest hath God in you by making you out of nothing! what a title hath he to your heart! If the husbandman counts that tree his own which he hath planted; or the carver that image his own which he has made; certainly thou art God's, and he may call thee his own, who hath made thee out of nothing. There is a difference between making out of nothing, and making out of something. Men

cannot make any piece of workmanship, but they must have matter to work upon ; but the Lord made thee out of nothing, therefore certainly thou art his ; and therefore the right and dominion of God must be infinitely greater than that of man ; and what a right hath God by his providence ! Thou hast a right in thy servant, who hath his well-being from thee, and therefore surely God hath a right to thee, who by his providence supplies thee with all things thou wantest.

[7.] Meditation on the creature will beget trust and dependence on God ; this is the main thing that God aimeth at, that we be drawn to trust in God, when we think of the creature. The heathens knew much of God in the general, they were able to discourse of his eternal power and godhead ; but when they came to draw practical inferences, how they should trust in him, then ‘they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened,’ Rom. i. 20, 21. When we consider the great effect of his mighty power, and yet do not trust in the Lord, these are but vain imaginations. The chief thing in meditation on the creation is, that you should come away with the greater trust, for in the creation there are all arguments of trust. There you learn the freeness of God’s grace, when God made all things out of nothing, certainly the creature could merit nothing ; and there you learn the exactness of his care, because in his wise decrees he had a care of thee when thou wert not, therefore he will have a care of thee when thou art : Ps. cxlv. 15, ‘The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season ;’ therefore he will supply man. And so then you learn the greatness of his power ; and that is the reason of the apostle’s expression : 1 Peter iv. 19, ‘Commit your souls unto God as unto a faithful creator.’ Thence doth the quiet rest and establishment of spirit arise ; he is able to raise means, to create deliverances, to supply all your wants, and relieve you in all your distresses.

Doct. 2. We understand the truth and wonders of the creation by faith, and not by reason.

Take these propositions to clear the point—

1. There are three sorts of lights which God hath bestowed upon men ; the light of nature, the light of grace, and the light of glory. These are like the three several lights God hath set up in the firmament, the sun, the moon, and the lesser stars. There is the daylight of glory, which is the sun when it arises in its strength and brightness ; and there is the light of faith, which is like the moon, a light which shines in a dark place ; then there is the weak and feeble ray of reason, which is like the light of the lesser stars. By the first light, we see God as he is in himself ; by the second, God as he hath discovered himself in the word ; by the third, God as he is seen in the creature. By the light of glory we behold God in himself, ‘we see him face to face,’ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The expression is used in opposition to the veil of the shadows of the law : here we can only behold God as he is veiled under words of corporeal and sensible significations ; but there ‘we shall see him as he is,’ 1 John iii. 2. By the second light we see God as he is pleased to reveal himself in his word : and by the light of reason we see God in his works, as he hath displayed his glory in the whole frame of the

world : so that there is vision, faith and reason. The one is the fruit of our glorification, and the other of our redemption, and the last of our creation.

2. In this world reason had been enough, if man had continued in his innocency. His mind then was his only bible, and his heart his only law and rule ; but he tasted of the tree of knowledge and hereby he and we got nothing but ignorance. It is true, there are some relics of reason left for human uses, and to leave us without excuse ; therefore it is said, John i. 9, ‘That Christ is the true light, which enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world.’ It is by his grant that a little reason is continued to us. But now in matters of religion, we had need of external and foreign helps. Man left to himself would only grope after God. In many things reason is altogether blind ; in other things the light of it is very faint, weak and ineffectual. This is the sad state of man since the fall, his reason is blind ; and that not only out of weakness, but out of prejudice ; there is not only darkness in our mind, but there is pride and malice too, by which we are set against the truths of the word.

3. The only remedy and cure for this is faith, and external revelation from God. The blindness of reason is cured by the word ; the pride of reason is cured by the grace of faith. Revelation supplies the defect of it ; and faith takes down the pride of it, and captivates the thoughts into the obedience of the truths represented in the word ; so that reason now cannot be a judge ; at best it is but a handmaid to faith. And though the mysteries of religion transcend reason, yet that is not an argument of the falsity of the word, but of the imbecility and weakness of our own reason : and those mysteries, which we cannot comprehend, do but put us in mind of the sad consequences of the fall of man.

4. The doctrine of the creation is a mixed principle ; much of it is liable to reason, but most of it can only be discovered by faith. We must consider the creation two ways, either *ex parte rei*, or *ex parte modi* ; either the thing itself, or the necessary circumstances. For the thing itself, that was known to the heathens, that there was a creation ; but the manner how was wholly hidden from reason, and can only be supplied by revelation of the word. Nature doth confess a creation, but faith must teach us what it is.

More distinctly I shall lay down my sense in these further propositions—

[1.] By the light of nature it may be known that there was a creation. It may be proved by evident reason that there was a first cause, from whence all propagation begins ; otherwise we shall be left to a perpetual wandering, and shall not know out of what womb all things that are in the world issued forth. Plutarch propounds the question ; whether the hen were before the egg, or the egg before the hen ? Look upon all creatures ; is the acorn before the oak, or the oak before the acorn ? the spawn before the fish or the fish before the spawn ? therefore at first there must be fishes created, and there must be oaks created. To this purpose the apostle quoteth Aratus, Acts xvii. 28, *τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένοι ἔσμεν*, for we are his offering.

[2.] The heathens discovered that there was also a first mover, a

first cause of all things in the world. Aristotle, though he held the eternity of the world, confesseth there was *πρώταν αἰτίαν κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως πάσης*; and he saith that Homotimus and Anaxagoras were necessitated by the appearance of the truth to acknowledge it; and that all perfections which are in other things by participation, are in the first cause essentially; and that this first cause was of such infinite power and wisdom, as appeared, because all things are ordered to such good uses and purposes. The apostle saith, Rom. i. 19, 20, ‘That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.’ And he disputes upon it as a granted principle, that there was a first cause: Acts xvii. 28, ‘For in him we live, and move, and have our being;’ and Acts xiv. 15, ‘He is the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.’

[3.] This knowledge in the heathens was but faint, and full of hesitancy and confusion, of very little profit and comfort. Though they did acknowledge a God and first cause, yet they multiplied feigned deities and set up many gods; they had not any full and saving light, which might be a comfort and profit to their souls; they could not see this first cause, so as to fear him, and trust in him for his power, love him for his goodness, and honour him and adore him for his wisdom: Rom. i. 21, 22, ‘They become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.’ They could not draw out the necessary consequences of these truths, to love, trust, fear, worship, and honour this first cause; there they were vain in their imaginations. Therefore our Lord proposeth the gentiles as a pattern of unbelievers: Mat. vi. 32, ‘After all these things do the gentiles seek,’ when he spoke how we should trust God. They had but rude and imperfect notions of the power and care of God, and could not apply them for their profit and benefit, therefore they are carking and caring, and cannot trust God.

[4.] The manner and the necessary circumstances of the creation were wholly unknown to the heathens. Effects discover the cause, but they cannot discover the circumstances of action, because those depend wholly upon the will of the agent. So because the circumstances of the creation were not necessary, but did wholly depend upon the will of God, reason and nature cannot know them, unless God make them known in the word; as, for instance, they knew not perfectly who made the world; not when, nor how it was made, nor whence it was made. Not who made the world: though they had some rude and gross conceits of the first cause, yet they looked upon him as a servile agent, working out of mere necessity, communicating his influences, because he could not choose to do otherwise. So when the world was made, the beginning and duration of it, this was wholly hidden from the heathens. The scripture can only show it to us. Therefore many of the heathens complained of the great defect that was in their chronicles, that they had not an ancienter monument than the destruction of Troy; *Cur supra bellum Trojanum, et funera Trojæ;* so Lucretius, Macrobius. The writings of Moses are much more ancient

than all the gods of the heathens. The wars of Troy were about the time of the judges. The youngest prophets of the old testament were before the oldest philosophers and historians of the gentiles. Then they knew not whence, from what term, God should begin his work. This is a maxim of nature, *ex nihilo nihil fit*—that nothing can be made, out of nothing ; therefore this puzzled them how the creature should be first made, since it was contrary to that natural maxim, that the whole world should be framed out of nothing, and that by the mere word of God ; this never sunk into the heads of the wisest heathens. Hence proceeded such difference of opinions among them ; some held the world to be a work of mere chance, as Epicurus and Lencippus ; others, that it was eternal and coeval with the first cause, as Aristotle ; and the Platonists, that it was made out of some eternal pre-existent matter. Then they could not tell how it was made in six days ; nature, reason, and discourse could never have found out that, which Moses hath written concerning the distinct originals of all propagation, and the framing of every creature in its rank and place ; they could see such things, but not the original of the fowls, of fishes, of man, and of all the beasts of the field. Nature could propound questions, how were these made ? but nature could never assoil them. Then they could not tell the end why the world was made. Aristotle saith, We are not at all bound to the first cause, whether he did good or evil, because he did work out of servile necessity, and could do no otherwise. Moses tells us, God made all things for his glory, that he may be worshipped, and honoured, and served by the creature ; that the highest heaven was a place for man ; that the soul might enjoy bliss and eternal communion with God. All these circumstances were hidden from them ; they were not matters of sense, they were not before our eyes : but faith makes us to apprehend the six days' works, as if we had seen and stood by, as the angels did, applauding every day's work. They were not matters of reason, because transcending those principles that are agreeable to the rules of nature ; and they depend merely on the unlimitedness of God's will, and the exuberancy of his power.

Use 1. For information. If by faith only we can understand the truth and wonders of the creation, then,

1. It informs us, that reason is not the judge of controversies in religion, and the doubts that do arise about the matters of God are not to be determined by the dictates of nature. If then we leave the written word and follow the guidance of our own reason, we shall but puzzle ourselves with impertinent scruples, and leave ourselves under a dissatisfaction. Usually men of parts and ingenuous education are liable to this snare ; for having the highest claim to the exercise of reason, they are apt to set up reason above the word. Celsus said to his fellow heathens, that we should follow reason, and that all error was brought into the world by faith. And Galen, when he read some passages of Moses, said, *Multa dicit, nihil probat*—he saith much, but he proves nothing. In many things we have only the saying of scripture, and it is enough the scripture saith it. If we should believe no more than the strength of reason and discourse will assure us, we should soon deny the doctrine of the trinity, the deity of Christ, and the creation ; reason can never trace these things. This is the inlet of all

atheism and profaneness, when men set up reason as the highest tribunal. Indeed there are many uses of reason; partly to prepare and induce us to hearken to the word of God; this is the mind God hath given us to know him, the stock left in nature, upon which he would implant faith. And partly, it is of great use, that after we have believed, we may receive an additional confirmation; when we believe a thing, reason may judge, if it be not equal and fit we should believe it. Faith makes advantage of the confessions and acknowledgments of nature: there is no truth we believe, but afterwards we may find excellent advantages to confirm us in it by rational searches. These confirmations of reason are of great use for the quenching those fiery darts which Satan flings into the soul, by which he would bear down all principles of religion. And partly, to prevent absurd intrusions upon our belief and fanatical opinions. Ignorance and error have many times been veiled under a pretence of mystery, and things hidden from reason. Though reason must be captivated to faith, yet not to fancy. Reason is made a judge many times where the word is silent; but for the truths revealed in the word, though they are above reason, yet they are not against reason; though reason cannot comprehend them, yet they are not repugnant to reason. And partly reason is of great use, that we may search the scripture, and draw out necessary consequences from the truths revealed in the word; this we may do by the warrant of Christ. The mysteries of salvation must be believed first, that we may understand them; we must receive them from God's bare testimony, afterwards search them out, that our belief may be the more distinct and explicit. Thus reason serveth faith. There is a great use of reason in religion, so it keeps its place, being subordinate to faith.

2. It informs us that the heathens had never light enough for salvation. Their charity is too large who think that the heathens may be taught enough by those natural apostles, sun, moon, and stars. Certainly they are blind in the work of redemption, since they are so blind in the work of creation. Though God hath not left himself without witness, Act xiv. 17, that is, such as may lead them to God the creator, yet not to lead them to God the Redeemer, there is enough given to the heathens for conviction, but not for conversion. Therefore all those that God would call to himself, he gave them a higher light, even the revelation of the word. Though nature tells us, there is a God, yet what he is, and how to be worshipped, and how he came to be displeased with the world, and how he came to be reconciled, of all this it telleth us nothing. Nature finds itself depraved, but it knows not the remedy and cure.

3. It shows us the great advantage that we have by faith, and by the written word. If we had been left to the puzzle and distraction of our own reason, how should we have known whence the world came, and how it was made by God? Reason, as it exerciseth itself in several ways since the ruin of it in Adam's fall, is of several dimensions, according to men's natural constitution, moral education, and industry. But he hath given us the blessed rules of his word. What a puzzle and distraction were the philosophers left in? A poor child learneth more by a catechism, than all the philosophers by their profound

researches ; those that have the smallest abilities of reason may here learn. The philosophers, though they spent all their days in painful studies, and were endowed with rare abilities of learning, yet what novices were they in spiritual things ! they cannot tell what the happiness of the soul is, nor where it shall be enjoyed, nor the means to attain it ; they know not how the world was made, nor how it shall end.

4. It informs us, that religion is not illiterate. Grace doth not make men simple, but rather perfects human learning. None discern truths with more comfort and satisfaction than a believer ; it solves all doubts and riddles of reason. *Quod ratio non capit, fides intelligit.* Simple men despise learning, and carnal men despise grace, both on the same grounds. Faith and reason must go together, though reason must be subordinate. We should not despise the help of human learning, neither should we despise grace, as if it did make men dull, and blunt the edge of their parts. Reason and faith, when kept in their proper place, are of excellent advantage. Join faith with your study, and all will be more clear, otherwise we shall stumble at truths. When these three lights are in conjunction, the light of parts, the light of refined reason and the light of grace, they bring forth admirable and happy effects. But on the other side, the decay of learning hath been the sensible abatement of religion. Religion hath never lost more than when outward helps have been despised, which men do to hide their own ignorance. When the apostle speaks against the vain abuse of learning, he gives God thanks : 1 Cor. xiv. 18, ‘I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all,’ implying that it is the usual course of men to speak against that which they want. A heated iron pierceth into a board though blunt, more than edged tools when cold. Holiness and outward advantages must go together.

5. We learn hence the properties of faith to have knowledge, assent, and obedience in it ; therefore it is not a blind reliance, but a clear, distinct persuasion of such truths, concerning which human discourse can give us no satisfaction. Faith is opposite to three things. The knowledge of it is opposite to ignorance ; faith brings the soul to the understanding of the things of salvation. And it is opposite to folly ; it makes us improve the mysteries of salvation to our spiritual comfort : Luke xxiv. 25, ‘O ye fools, and slow of heart to believe ;’ and Eph. i. 18, ‘That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,’ &c. There is the wisdom of believers to apply truths to their spiritual advantage. And it is opposite to incogitancy and carelessness of spirit, it makes us turn our minds upon the things of religion.

6. It is the nature of faith to subscribe to a revelation in the word, though reason give little assistance and aid. The word is enough to faith, though the thing seem unlikely to reason ; it stands not upon appearance or probabilities. When we have a doctrine laid down in the word, we must not mind whether it be probable, otherwise we should never believe a creation, which is the making of all things out of nothing.

Use 2. It serves to stir you up to act faith. What is the use of faith upon the creation ? To answer all the objections of reason, and settle the truth in the soul, and to improve it for spiritual uses and

advantages, and to facilitate the belief of other truths upon this ground; did he make the world out of nothing? Many truths are less wonderful than this.

SERMON X.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear—HEB. xi. 3.

Now I come to consider the circumstances of the creation; and the first is, ‘that the worlds were made,’ or framed. In the original, it is, *κατηρτισθαι*, ‘set in joint,’ a metaphor taken from the perfect frame of man’s body, where every member, vein and artery is aptly disposed, and in its proper place; so are all creatures settled in their due proportion and order; there is nothing wanting either for use, or for ornament; it is all fitly framed and made up into a complete mass and body. The note is this, *viz.*

Doct. That the world was framed in an accurate, orderly, and perfect manner.

1. I shall illustrate the point by some similitudes out of scripture.
2. I shall show wherein the harmony and perfect order of the creation did consist.
3. I shall answer a doubt that may be commenced against the doctrine.

First, To illustrate the note by some similitudes out of scripture. The perfection and order of the world is compared to man’s body, to a host or army, and to a house or excellently contrived building.

1. It is compared to the body of a man. The world is set in joint, and there is a great deal of likeness and similitude: 1 Cor. xii. 12, ‘As the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body being many, are one body;’ that is, though they be of different shape and different uses, yet they all make up but one body. So the several ingredients into this great mass and lump are for the matter, worth, and influence of a diverse nature; yet all these members and pieces of the creation are tied to one another by secret bands and ligaments, as the members of the body are; such a confederacy and compliance is there between all the parts of the world, they fall into one common frame as several joints, by a mutual agreement and proportion.

2. It is compared to an host or army: Gen. ii. 1, ‘Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them;’ Ps. xxxiii. 6, ‘By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth; he gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap, and he layeth up the depth in storehouses.’ Therefore God is called the Lord of hosts upon this reason, because the creatures were not huddled together in confusion, but stand like soldiers in their orderly rank, as a well-marshalled host under the

conduct of God. This word host doth not only imply their services and operations under God's command and conduct, but their order and government. The Septuagint render it by *κόσμος*, to signify the beauty of it. All the parts of the creation are like a well-ordered army standing in rank and file, the places of their abode as so many tents. And God hath his magazine and treasury out of which he doth supply them : Job xxxviii. 22, 23, 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow ? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war ?'

3. It is compared to a curious house. The universe hath an excellent resemblance to a frame of building, Job xxxviii. 4-6. There you have this notion, where we are told of laying the foundation, and the corner-stone, and of a line, and measure, and the like; all figurative terms which are taken from an outward building. The whole world is but one great house ; the earth is the floor, the sea is the watercourse for it ; heaven is the arch and roof of it ; God is the architect of this house, but man is the inhabitant and tenant. And lest he should want comfort, the sun and stars are like so many windows to let in light, all to set forth the glory and magnificence of God. There are several rooms and chambers in this house ; therefore the prophet speaks, Amos ix. 6, 'He buildeth his stories in the heaven.' The earth by its own proper weight remains unmovable in the centre of the world, and the spheres one above another are as so many stories in a house.

Secondly, Wherein this order and beauty of the world doth consist. It stands in six things.

1. In the wonderful multitude and variety of creatures, distributed into so many several excellent natures and forms, they all do proclaim the beauty and order of the whole world. It is no difficult thing with one seal to make many impressions of the same stamp, or to print many sheets with the same letters when once set ; but that God should diversify forms, and that in such an infinite manner, that he should leave such different impressions from the seal of his power, according to the platform of his own counsel, this can never sufficiently enough be admired ; herbs, plants, flowers, fruits, birds, beasts ; and among living creatures there is a great deal of difference in figure, taste, colour, and smell ; then such variety of living creatures ; among men, men's faces though they were all drawn by the same pencil, yet what difference is there ! Scarce two men alike among so many millions. The stars the apostle saith, 'one differs from another in glory,' 1 Cor. xv. 41. The angels are above them, and there is a great deal of difference among angels ; some are thrones, some dominions, some powers, some principalities, as the apostle reckons them up, Col. i. 16. So that when we consider this, the wonderful diversity of forms, we may cry out, Ps. civ. 24, 'Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' The world would not have been so beautiful, if all had been great, none small ; if all hot, no creature cold ; all moist, no dry ; or all dry, and no moist ; as the frame of men's bodies would not have been half so beautiful, if all were eye, or all head, or all heart, or all brain ; or, as in outward things, are all not rulers and captains,

but there is a difference. This speaks the beauty and excellency of the world, the variety of God's works.

2. The beauty and artificial composition of all things. Human wit cannot reach it; whether we respect the outward shape or inward frame, look upon man; 'He is fearfully and wonderfully made,' saith the psalmist, Ps. cxxxix. 14. The beauty of women overcomes, besots, and takes away the heart of wise men, it is so great; nothing can be added or taken away from any creature, but there will be deformity and ugliness. Do but take away an eye from a man; or add a mouth to him; how deformed would it be, to see a man with one eye, or two mouths! Nay, look upon the baser creatures, those that seem to be the most uncomely parts of the creation, yet there is a beauty in their make and frame. A man would look upon a swine as a filthy creature, yet to see a swine without ears, how uncomely! Nay, go to lower things; God hath showed his power in great things, but his wisdom in small. In a gnat, in a grain of mustard seed, how much of God may be seen! What virtue is there in that small seed to grow up into a tree! Certainly, nature is nowhere seen so much as in the least things. Christ sendeth us to the lilies of the field, Mat. vi. 29. What curious drafts are there in the flowers of the field! Solomon sends us to the ant. So we may go to a gnat; to see such a little creature to have feet, head, and heart, all the inward senses, and all the outward senses, all necessary sagacity for its own preservation; how wonderfully are these little creatures made! But now look to man's inward frame, there is more, all full of riddle. Galen, when he was dissecting the hand of man, he fell into a great admiration of that God that made man. It is wonderful to consider the continual motion that is in man's body, and that without alteration. Men have laboured much to make a clock that should run by the force of a weight for four and twenty hours. Oh, how great is the wisdom of God, and the power of God that made man! So that there is a clock that still strikes within him from his birth till he comes to die, and be no more in the world—that the nutritive power should be working perpetually without intermission, that there should be a continual beating of the pulses, that the lungs and arteries should move without ceasing to seventy or ninety years, nay, before the flood, nine hundred years. All the creatures are curiously and wonderfully made and framed.

3. The order and beauty of the world consists as in their composition, so in their disposition, and in the apt placing of all things. When we look upon every creature, we shall see it could not have a better place than God hath bestowed upon it; the superior and inferior bodies are all exactly ordered. The earth, of all bodies the most heavy and ponderous, is lowest, and the foundation of all the rest. The elements as they are more pure and simple, so they have an upper place—the waters above the earth, and the air above the waters. Then the stars, which are most pure and simple, they have the uppermost places of the world; and the sun, as king and prince, placed in the middle of the stars. So that the air and water, which are of a middle purity, are like so many couples and loops which tie heaven and earth together, and they are between them both. The air conveys the influences of the stars to the earth, and preventeth emptiness and vacuity.

The water that is more impure, though not altogether so gross a body as the earth, insinuates itself with the earth, and makes it fruitful. Living creatures, because they are made up of elements, they are placed in them, some in the air, some upon the earth, some in the water, that so from above and beneath they may receive comfort and profit; heat and comfort from above, and food from beneath. Then they are exquisitely and accurately placed: creatures that are hugest and of the greatest multitude are put into the sea, Leviathan is to sport there, lest if they should be upon earth, they might be an annoyance to man, and cause too great a waste of food. And therefore the reasonable creatures, they are in the highest and lowest parts of the world; the angels in the highest heavens, and man upon earth; because in both ends of the world God would have some to behold his glory, and to contemplate the whole frame. In short, the earth, the dwelling-place of man, standeth fixed and unmoved. The sea rolls up and down to keep it pure and fresh; the heavens move to convey their influences; the clouds are carried hither and thither, God rides up and down upon them, as princes in their chariots: Isa. xix. 1, 'The Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt;' Ps. xviii. 10, 'And he rode upon a cherub and did fly, yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind;' that so the earth might receive due moisture for the use of man. Then the distribution of the waters into all the parts of the earth, as it were by pipes, conveyances, and channels, prepared on purpose, that all the creatures may have drink and refreshment. The psalmist takes notice of that, Ps. civ. 10, 11, 'He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst; he watereth the hills from his chambers.'

4. This accurate frame is seen in the wonderful consent of all the parts of the world, and the proportion they bear one to another. There are several steps and degrees in the creature, by which we may go higher and higher, and climb up till we come to God himself. The proportion of the creatures leads us up to God. As to instance, in the general rank and kind of all things in the world, the lowest creatures have only being; others have not only being, but life, as plants; others have not only life, but feeling and sense, as beasts; others have not only life and sense, but reason and understanding, as men. But now man is in a lower sphere of understanding, he receives objects by his senses, and he needs his fancy, therefore there is a higher sphere of understanding creatures, even angels, and they have a higher manner of reason and understanding than man. So above the angels, there is a God. Nature climbs step by step, and leads us to God. A stone hath being, but not life. A plant grows, but feels not as a beast. A beast hath sense, but cannot discourse and reason as a man; and sense is more imperfect, than reason, because it must have a corporeal organ or instrument. Man's reason is lower than angels, because man, in all the discourses and traverses of his mind, needs the help and ministry of imagination and fancy, which angels need not. But now an angel is lower than God, but yet higher than man, he doth not need the outward species and shapes of things to be received by the senses, but the understanding of an angel requires either some revelation, or the presence of the object: but now

God hath a higher manner of understanding—he is a pure act ; above all these, he needs nothing without himself; needs not the presence of the object, as angels do ; nor an instrument, as the beasts do ; nor imagination, as man doth ; for he knows all things that maybe by his own all-sufficiency, and all things that shall be by his wise decree. Nature grows from worse to better, from lower to greater, till it brings us up to the being of beings and chiefest perfection. In metals there is the same proportion ; some baser, others more noble ; first iron, then lead, then tin, then brass, then silver, then gold. In plants some have only leaves, others flowers, others fruits, others aromatical gums and sweet spices. So in sensible creatures there is a wonderful difference in their ranks; from a gnat till you come to a man : there is a progress in nature, that still man may go further and further, till he find out the first cause. The whole world is a poem of praise, in which some verses have long feet and some short ; there are some small and inconsiderable creatures, and others higher, and nearer to the great perfection of God, that we may climb up from the creature until we come to converse with God.

5. In the mutual ministry and help of the creatures one to another. They are disposed in such a comely order, that they yield a mutual supply one to another, such as may best conserve the universe, cherish man, and glorify God. For instance, the earth is cherished by the heat of the stars, moistened by water, and by the temperament of heat and moisture it is made fruitful, and sends forth innumerable plants for the comfort and use of living creatures, that living creatures may be for the use of man ; it is wonderful to consider the subordination of all causes, and the proportion they bear one to another: the heavens work upon the elements, the elements work upon the earth, the earth yieldeth fruits and plants for the use and comfort of man and other living creatures. The prophet takes notice of this admirable climax and gradation that is in nature : Hosea ii. 21, 22, ‘ Saith the Lord, I will bear the heavens, and they shall bear the earth, and the earth shall bear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall bear Jezreel.’ We are always looking to the next hand ; we call upon the corn, wine, and oil, and they can do nothing, except the earth send forth sap and influence. The earth can do nothing without the clouds, unless God unstop the bottles of heaven, and let out the rain ; the clouds can do nothing without the stars, and the stars can do nothing without God ; the creatures are all beholden one to another, and all to God. There is an excellent knot and chain of causes in the creation. Look, as the joints of the body are hollow to take in one another, so there is an established order in the course of nature, all the causes hang together.

6. In the wise government and conservation of all things according to the rules and laws of the creation. Divine providence is mightily seen in this, in the guiding of all things by the laws of nature, as in the constant course of the stars, by which we have the seasons of day and night. That man may go forth to labour, the sun gives him light ; and that man may go to his rest, the sun travels to the other hemisphere ; and God draws a curtain of darkness round about us, that we may sleep without disturbance ; so also that we may have winter and summer, spring and harvest in their seasons, according to God’s promise, Gen.

viii. 22. The sun hath its period and point in the heaven, according to which it doth rise and set. David takes notice of the sun's setting : Ps. civ. 19, 'He appointeth the moon for seasons ; the sun knoweth his going down ;' the meaning is, he hath appointed the moon for seasons, the months being distinguished by the course of the moon. 'The sun knows his going down,' the days being measured by the motion of the sun. The length and shortness of days are all measured by God, and the sun knows when to set at an hour and minute according as God appointed him. Though there be every day some variety according to the degrees of the zodiac, yet the sun observes the just points of the compass : Job xxxviii. 12, 'He causeth the day-spring to know his place.' The sun knows when to rise at such and such an hour, and such a point of the heavens, he knows his place. So it is very notable for the other stars, though they move most swiftly, and though they never cease ; though some go round in a slower, and some in a swifter space, yet they always keep their measures and proportions, and their motions are equally distant. The stars go round in four and twenty hours, and the planets in various motions, and though there be so many ten thousand millions of stars, yet they do not interfere and jostle one another. It is notable when God would express the numerousness of Abraham's posterity, he useth three expressions to him : Gen. xxii. 17, 'They shall be as the dust of the earth, as the sand of the sea-shore, and as the stars of heaven.' From this expression, wherein he promiseth him a multitude of children that should come of his loins, we may conclude that there must needs be a great company of stars. Now that in such a crowd and throng of stars that are always moving, there should be no clashing, no confusion, no interfering with one another, but still they keep their path, and go on according to the law and decree which God hath set unto them ; who can admire this sufficiently ? So in upholding all ranks of all other creatures, and guiding them for the great purposes and uses of providence. His gathering together the drops of the air : Job xxvi. 8, 'He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them ;' that he should keep up such a quantity of water in the thin clouds, as in so many bottles or barrels, till they be condensed into rain and then pour them out in drops for the good and use of man. So the power of God is mightily seen in bridling the sea. Though it be above the earth, yet it is said : Ps. civ. 9, 'He hath set bounds to the waters, that they may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth.' Though above the earth, yet the Lord keeps them up in a heap together, and keeps them back that they shall not return to drown the world.

Thirdly, I come to answer an objection that might be commenced.

Obj. If God made the world in such harmony and order, whence came all those disorders that are in the world ? We see some creatures are ravenous ; other creatures are poisonous ; all are frail, and still decaying and hastening to their own ruin. Whence come murrains, sicknesses, and diseases ? whence come such destructive enmities and antipathies between beast and beast, yea and beasts of the same kind ? whence come such dislocations, and unjointings of nature by tempests and earthquakes ? All elements have been one time or other routed into confusion ; the air hath been imprisoned in the bowels of the earth,

from whence come earthquakes ; the sea swelleth above its banks, from whence come inundations ; the earth rolled hither and thither in the sea, which maketh dangerous shoals and quicksands ; and the fire reserved for the vastation of that great day, ‘ When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up,’ 2 Peter iii. 10. Whence do these come ?

Ans. I answer. All these confusions and disorders of nature are the effects of sin. Our sins are as a secret fire that hath melted and burnt asunder the secret ties and confederations of nature. Thence are there so many destructions and degenerations, such enmities, cruelties, and antipathies among the creatures. Man, being the Lord of all things, was not only punished in his own person, but in the creatures, which are his servants and retinue. The Lord had given to us the free use of these things, and dominion over them ; but upon our rebellion, the frame of nature is much altered and changed : Gen. iii. 17, ‘ Cursed is the earth for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.’ The word there used is **אָרְמָה**, to show that it is cursed in that regard as it belonged to Adam, and was part of man’s possession ; and by earth he doth not only mean the lower element, but the whole visible world ; it was made for man, and it was all cursed for man’s sake. So it is taken elsewhere : Ps. cxv. 16, ‘ The heavens, even the heavens, are the Lord’s ; but the earth hath he given to the children of men ;’ and where it is said, 2 Peter iii. 7, ‘ The heavens and the earth that are now,’ &c.—that is, the world. Wherever thou seest thorns and thistles to grow, remember that sin is the root of them. Whenever thou seest the seas toss, and the confederation of the creature to be disturbed, this is the fruit of man’s disorder and rebellion against God. Whenever thou seest a fruitful land grow barren, that is the actual curse, a fruit of the original curse that is passed upon the earth for man’s sin. So Rom. viii. 28, the apostle saith, ‘ The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.’ Mark, the creature groans under the burden of vanity and corruption ; what is the reason ? It is not the fault of the creature, not willingly, for by the bent and poise of nature they all seek their own preservation ; they have a constant inclination to their own good ; but we, that had freewill and abused it, brought misery upon ourselves and the whole creation ; therefore the apostle saith, ‘ It was by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.’ It noteth both the efficient and meritorious cause ; by reason of man as a sinner and by reason of God as a judge ; so the creature is subjected and brought under the burden of vanity. God, to show how much he was offended with man, would discover it by the confusions and disorders of nature. As Moses in a holy anger broke the tables when he saw the people turn aside to idolatry ; so when man turned unthankful and rebellious to God the king, it dissolved much of the order and beauty which otherwise would have been in the creation.

Obj. But because the objection speaks of many things, Whence come venomous things, &c. therefore take another question, what that is we may properly look upon to be a fruit and issue of the fall ?

I answer, all corruptive and destructive alterations ; for in entire

nature all alterations should have been perfect. So also the dying of the creature to feed and clothe man is a fruit of the fall, the issue of sin. It was sin that took away the usefulness of the creature to man; for in innocence they were all obedient to man; the creatures were ready to fall at his foot, and were at his beck. So all the enmities of creatures among themselves are the fruit of the curse. All monstrosities and deformities came in by the fall. Therefore the prophet when he speaks of our restoration by Christ, it doth imply the restoration of the creature. The sun, by reason of sin, hath lost much of his light. When man is fully restored in glory, 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,' Isa. xxx. 26, 'then the lamb and the lion shall lie down together,' Isa. xi. 6, 7, for thus it was in innocence. Those places decipher the happiness of the creature upon man's full restoration; and imply how it was before man's fall, God made all things good,' Gen. i. 31. But now before the fall I suppose there were some things poisonous, and some things corruptible; and my reason is, because God would have the world to be furnished with all kinds of natures; therefore there ought to be corruptible natures as well as incorruptible, and poisonous creatures as well as those that are wholesome, though they could do man no harm. If a man comes into an artificer's shop, and seeth many instruments, he thinks them superfluous; at length he takes up a sharp-edged tool which wounds him; this is no blame to the artificer but to himself; it is his own fault, because he did not know the use of it: so these things were to set forth the glory of God; but when man by sin lost his knowledge, they proved obnoxious and hurtful to him. Now for toads and venomous plants, I believe most of them were the fruits of the curse of the earth, they being not so much parts of the world, as plagues of the world; therefore they came in by the fall, and so should put us in mind of the degeneration of the creature.

Use 1. It discovers the glory of God.

1. The whole world is but God's shop, where are the masterpieces of his wisdom and majesty; these are seen very much in the order of causes, and admirable contrivance of the world.

[1.] The wisdom of God and his counsel is mightily seen. The world is not a work of chance, but of counsel and rare contrivance. All that the Lord did here, he did it by art, and according to the inward idea and frame that was in his own mind; therefore the prophet saith, Isa. xl. 12, 'He hath weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance.' God did as it were take a balance into his hands and weigh out all the creatures; he hath disposed all things by number, weight, and measure; he hath done it in exact proportion. Oh, let us admire the wisdom of God! it is above our search: Eccles. iii. 11, 'No man can find out the work of the Lord from the beginning to the end;' we may admire it in the general, and say it is all good, but we cannot find it out. Some little glimpses of his wisdom we have, that we may cry out, He is a great God, wonderful in counsel, mighty in working. But oh, the rare and wonderful contrivance! we cannot discern all the beauty and all the order of it. Did we but consider the various disposition of light and darkness, of heat and cold, of moisture and dryness, the artifice that

is seen in all things that he hath made, we should say, certainly he that made these things is a wise God, and wonderful in counsel. We know the power of God by making all things out of nothing; but we know the wisdom of God by making all things in such an exquisite frame and order. Do but compare it with yourselves; we are soon tired, it is much to us to promote a petty interest in the world, to spread our small nets, and extend and reach out our heart to the cares of our private families; but how wise is that God that had the model of all things within himself, from the elephant to the ant, that disposed of all things in such a manner, that hath made and formed them with such apt proportions, that guideth the courses of the heavens, and keepeth the stars in their paths and order!

[2.] The majesty and greatness of God. Look up to him, that is at the upper end of all these causes, that are so sweetly subordinate to one another in the world; and he can turn them as he pleaseth: Job, speaking of the bright cloud, saith, chap. xxxvii. 12, 'It is turned round about by his counsels; that they may do whatsoever he commands.' Look up to him that is the head of angels. We are dazzled at the splendour and magnificence of an earthly king or prince; when we see him surrounded with dukes, earls and lords, these seem great things to us. How should we wonder at the majesty of God, that is encompassed with cherubim and seraphim, principalities, powers, thrones and dominions! How do we wonder at the majesty of kings riding in triumph in their chariots! Oh, how should we wonder at him that rides upon the wings of the wind! It was the brag of the king of Assyria, Isa. xix. 8, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' But he hath angels for his courtiers, and clouds for his chariots, Ps. xviii. 10, 11, and a golden garment of light for his covering, Ps. civ. 2, whose throne is in heaven, and footstool is upon earth; and in heaven he sits in great majesty, commanding all things; and hath all creatures ready pressed for his service; he can but beckon to them, and they engage in his quarrel: Judges. v. 20, 'They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.' He hath the stars in order, and all causes in order to fight his battles against a wicked man. The fighting of the stars I believe might be explained out of Josephus, lib. v. cap. 6, who thus relates it: 'When Israel was to engage against the Canaanites, there arose a great storm of hail, which the wind drove violently in the faces of the Canaanites, and did so benumb their hands with cold, that carried the targets, darts, and slings, that they could not use them; and did so batter their eyes, that it took away their sight, that they could not look up: but it came on the backs of the Israelites, which encouraged them to fall upon them, so that they made an utter slaughter of them.' Certainly the force of the stars is very great upon storms of hail, thunder, and winds: Job xxxvii. 6, 'He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth: likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.' So, ver. 12, 'He turned it about by his counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.' He can call the winds, and they will make a ready answer to God: Job. xxxviii. 35, 'Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here are we?' All creatures are ready; he doth but beckon to the creatures, and they presently go

upon his errand ; Lord, here are we, send us : whether shall I go ? saith the lightning ; where shall I go ? saith the thunder ; where shall I go ? saith the hail. They are ready to be despatched in an errand for the punishment of sinners.

SERMON XI.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

Use. 2. It sheweth us the excellency of order ; how pleasing order and method is to God : God hath always delighted in it. All his works are managed and carried on in an accurate order. So in all artificial works ; God speaks like a wise architect about the ark of Noah ; God gave directions how it should be framed : Gen. vi. 15, ‘The length of it shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth fifty cubits, the height thirty cubits.’ So for the tabernacle, it was according to the pattern in the mount, Exod. xxv. ; so for the table of show-bread, the knobs, bowls, and shafts of the candlestick, God gave special directions about them. Certainly God is a God of order, and not of confusion, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. All order is from God ; but all discord and confusion is from the devil. Order is pleasing to him in the state and civil administrations, in the church, and in the course of your private conversations.

1. In civil administrations in the commonwealth, there are several orders and constitutions that God hath made. The beauty of the world lieth in hills and valleys ; so in the state, some advanced to high places, others are low and poor. To bring all to one size, pitch and level, would soon introduce confusion into the world. There is order in heaven, order in hell, and there should have been order in innocency. There is order in heaven among the good angels. The scripture speaks of an archangel, 1 Thes. iv. 16 ; though he be not a monarch, there are others of the same rank and order : Dan. x. 13, ‘Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.’ And we read in Job of the morning stars, Job xxxviii. 7 ; that is, the archangels that excel the rest in glory. There are many of them, and God himself presides among them. Then there are inferior ministering angels, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions. Though we cannot define the difference, yet the scripture plainly intimates one, and lays down an order and subordination among the angels. Nay, there is some kind of order in hell itself. There is a prince among the infernal spirits ; whence comes that expression, ‘The devil and his angels,’ Mat. xxv. 41 ; and Rev. xii. 7, ‘The dragon and his angels,’ who is ‘called the devil and Satan,’ ver. 9. Jesus Christ, though he doth not positively lay it down, yet he doth not deny the common opinion of the Jews, that Beelzebub was the prince of evil spirits. The devils are not without their head and prince. And in innocency there should have been order too, if we had continued

in that state. There would have been government and some inequality ; there would have been difference of sex, women and men ; the relation of fathers and children ; the disparity of age, young men and old ; now much more is there need of it since the fall. There can be no peace without it. *Pax est tranquillitas ordinis*—peace is the quiet of everything in its proper place : it is a great blessing when all keep their due subordination, when magistrates keep their place, ministers and tradesmen keep their place ; otherwise things will be shamefully brought into confusion. Thus civil peace is the fruit of order, when every one keeps their place. When the elements are out of their places, then there are confusions in nature.

2. The Lord loves order in the church. I have observed the church is set forth in scripture by the same similitudes and resemblances by which the frame of the world is ; by an army, and by a house, and by the body of man. By an army or host: the church is ‘terrible as an army with banners,’ Cant. vi. 4 ; when all administrations are regularly carried according to the mind of God. It is compared to a house : Eph. ii. 22, ‘In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ And the prophet speaks of the order of the church : Isa. liv. 12, ‘I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles.’ It is compared to the body of man, which receives supplies and nourishment from the head : Col. ii. 19, ‘And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.’ Usually we are very loose and arbitrary in point of order. That is the great security, the fence and hedge of religion, when some instruct in the word, some are for inspection of manners, some minister to the poor ; when there are some to govern, and others to be governed ; when all keep their place, the church is beautiful, and terrible as an army with banners. This was the rejoicing of the apostle, Col. ii. 5, ‘To behold their order and steadfastness.’ The order of the church doth not consist in idle foppish ceremonies, but in decent administrations. But when men set the feet where the head should be, make every one to be guides to the church, then the beauty of the church is defaced, and all error and confusion is let into the church. The apostle complains of ‘Some that did walk disorderly,’ 2 Thes. iii. 11, ἀτάκτως the word signifies out of rank ; this provokes the just suspension of the influences of his grace.

3. The excellency of order in private conversation. We must be more orderly in disposing our actions for the conveniency of the spiritual life. Nothing so fit for a man as order and method in his private conversation but more especially in the spiritual life. We should not walk at random and at large. Till there be a settled frame in the course of our lives, it will never do well ; that we may not live at adventure in religion, and do good by flashes. God complains of them that are only good by fits, Hosea vi. 4. If we do not task ourselves, and propose a settled course, we shall be fickle and inconstant, off and on with God : Ps. l. 23, ‘To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.’ We should state all the courses and exercises of religion in the holy life ; that so our duty may not be a hindrance, but a help to another. We act loosely when we act

arbitrarily, and at random ; and shall be soon taken off by every allegation and plea of the flesh, if we do not lay a necessity upon ourselves, and settle a stated course of religious duties in our lives. You may do this lawfully : to this end God hath given us spiritual prudence and christian discretion. There are precepts in general for giving and doing, but for measure, number, and order, God would leave that to christian discretion. It is said, Ps. cxii. 5, ‘A good man guides all his affairs with discretion.’ Do not think such a stated course will be a snare to you, but it will prove a great advantage, and be a hedge to duty. All the experiences of the saints seal to it ; they could not else secure themselves against neglects and omissions, if they did not lay an engagement upon themselves by their own purposes and constitutions. Duties of ordinary recourse may be easily thus disposed. I confess it requires some wisdom to state it aright, lest we lie bound in chains of our own making, and watchfulness and resolution that we may keep it. When the proportions are rational, every idle objection should not take us off, for it is in the nature of paying a vow. Time dedicated to God is not in our power, nor revocable upon every slight occasion, only in case of inviolable necessity, to which duties of a divine institution do give place.

Use. 3. It discovers the odiousness of sin that disjointed the frame of nature. When God made the world, ‘he saw everything he had made, and behold it was very good,’ Gen. i. 31 ; but Solomon when he looked upon it, he saw all was ‘vanity of vanities,’ Eccles. i. 2. What is the reason ? sin intervened and so the course of nature was altered. It had been otherwise but for sin ; the creature had continued in their order, had we continued in our innocence. Let me spread a few considerations before you.

1. Do but consider what cause God hath to be angry with us. We are angry with those that break down a curious frame or contrivement we have made, as if any break curious glasses, pictures, or images, or a handsome structure. But consider, we have cracked the frame of the universe. The ties which hold the world are loosened by our sins, and much of the accurate order of the universe is inverted. There is a vanity among the creatures themselves, and sin and rebellion to us. Therefore when thy thoughts are cold and barren in acknowledging sin, especially in conceiving the evil that is in original sin, consider of this circumstance ; it turned a paradise into a wilderness and rude common ; it broke the frame of nature. As Moses, when he was angry with the Israelites, broke the tables ; so God hath broken the great frame of nature. Let that break your hearts which hath broken the world ; and that which hath wrought so much mischief in nature, let it trouble your souls.

2. Consider what a fit circumstance and consideration this is to represent the odiousness of sin ; here we have a sensible and constant memorial of the fruits of our rebellion. Man, being in a lower sphere of understanding, knows causes by their effects. Oh, see what a cause sin is ; look upon the effects of it in the disorders that are in the world : Jer. ii. 19, ‘Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.’ What would you think of that gall, a drop of which is enough to embitter an ocean

of sweetness? Such is sin. One sin poisoned all mankind at once, and cracked and dissolved the frame of nature. There were indeed presently upon the fall two dreadful effects of sin's influence, the misery Adam brought upon his own posterity, and the vanity he brought upon the creature; both are sad and continual resemblances. The first I confess is a very great representation of the evil of sin; every child that is born is a new memorial of the fall. God as it were said to Adam, as the prophet to Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 27, 'The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and to thy seed for ever;' now thou hast sinned, every child born shall be a leper. So all the children of Adam are as so many pledges and memorials of the folly and disobedience he had committed against God. But look without, and the creatures are made unhappy by man's fall. When we have drawn company with us into misery, their sight and presence doth but increase our sorrow; as if a prodigal should look upon the lean faces of his family, he cannot but with the more regret own the shame of his own excesses. We may all go to God, and say with David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'Lord, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but as for these sheep, what have they done?' so, Lord, we and our fore-fathers have all sinned against thee; but what have the creatures done, that they are destroyed and devoured? These memorials are constantly represented; not a bit we eat, not a cloth we put on, but may return these thoughts into our minds, these are the fruits of our sin. In innocency Adam was not ashamed of his nakedness, and the creatures might not be slain for our food.

3. We have no cause to exempt ourselves from this duty of mourning by laying the guilt upon Adam; as if he only were unthankful and rebellious against God. Consider, by sin we do as it were consent to Adam's act, and so we are accessory *post factum* to his guilt. Imitation is an approbation, and an implicit and interpretative consent. Saith Christ to the Jews, Mat. xxiii. 37, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets;' and ver. 36, 'Whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' How did they slay them? Because they continued still vexing the servants of God, therefore they are said to slay Zacharias. They that go on in any sin, do subscribe to the acts of those that went before them; we have continued in Adam's course of rebelling against God, therefore we are justly chargeable with his act. The father is fore-faulted for rebellion, and the child, continuing in the same course, doth approve his act, and besides his own personal guilt, is chargeable with the crimes of his forefathers. So that we may say, we have unsettled the universe. Jude 11, it is said 'these perished in the gainsaying of Korah.' How could that be, when there was such a huge distance and space of time between these and Korah? The meaning is, by practising the same sins, they came into a fellowship of the guilt; and imitating the fault, they became liable to the same judgment. Adam's first act brought on the original curse upon the creature, but our actual sins bring in an actual curse. As there is original and actual sin, so there is an original and an actual curse. It is true, Adam alone brought on the original curse: Gen. iii. 17, 'Cursed be the ground for thy sake:' but we bring on an actual curse: Ps. cvii. 33, 34, 'He turns rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them

that dwell therein.' Our actual sinning spoils the earth, and makes it barren and disorders the elements, and makes the rain from heaven unseasonable. Yea, we are guilty every day of doing that which Adam did once—laying a greater burden upon the creatures by abusing them to pomp, pride, excess, and carnal trust ; so you need not complain of Adam, but of your own selves. The creatures do not say, Lord, avenge our quarrel upon Adam, but upon these who have abused us : Hab. ii. 11, 'The stone out of the wall shall cry out, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.' The stone and timber shall cry, Lord, avenge us against this oppressor ; the house that is builded by extortion is crying to God against the unjust possessor. So James v. 3, 4, 'The rust of the gold and silver shall be a witness against them. Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth.' The rusty coin out of the coffer crieth, and requireth vengeance at God's hands ; the creatures that have been abused to disorder and excess do cry out of the glutton's belly and drunkard's throat, O Lord, avenge us ! The clothes upon our backs do as it were cry, Lord, we are abused to pride and vanity ; take notice of our quarrel and plea against man !

4. If we do not bemoan this disorder of nature, the very creatures will shame us. They groan under this burden of vanity that is brought upon them ; but we are senseless, slight and careless. It is even true what Christ said in another case, Luke xix. 40, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' So, if we hold our peace, the creatures will speak to our shame. Whither is man fallen ? The senseless and inanimate creatures are more moved with the evil of the present state than we are. That is the reason the prophet doth turn so often to the creatures, and address himself and speak to them : Jer. xii. 4, 'How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein ?' And Lam. ii. 18, 'O wall of the daughter of Sion, let tears run down like a river day and night.' The prophet calls upon the wall because the people were senseless. We go dancing like madmen to our misery and execution ; and the creatures mourn and groan under the burden of our sins : Hosea iv. 3, 'The land mourneth,' viz. for oaths, but where is the swearer that mourns ? The prophets often turn from men, and speak to the creatures : Deut. xxxii. 1, 'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak ; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.' And Micah vi. 2, 'Hear, O mountains, the Lord's controversy.' And, Jer. xxii. 29, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord,' because men will take no notice. The prophets may fret out their hearts, and spend their lungs in vain, before men will be sensible ; therefore he speaks to them. You hear the ox lowing, and the creatures groaning under the present vanity, and you do not lay it to heart. When you see unseasonable weather and barrenness, consider all these are the fruits of the original curse.

5. We of all the other parts of the creation have most cause to lay it to heart, because there is none so disordered and shattered by the fall as man is. There was none so excellent as man, being at first framed by the counsel and contrivance of God. When the world was made, it was said, 'Let it be ;' but man was made by counsel, 'Let

us make man after our own image,' Gen. i. 26. Man was made at first after the image of God, now he is scarce the image of himself; like a defaced picture, that hath some obscure lineaments of a fair draft. Man was a comely, beautiful, orderly creature at first; but now there are but some obscure relics of this left. The soul was to be a good guide to the body, and the body a dexterous instrument of the soul; but now both are out of frame; we have spoiled the temper of our bodies, and the order of our souls. The rabbis say, when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, his head ached; certainly it is true in a spiritual sense, then began aches and pains; how is all shattered and discomposed! We read in ecclesiastical story of a famous captain who triumphed in many battles, but afterward he fell into disgrace with the emperor, and first his lady was deflowered before his face, then his eyes bored out, and he was turned out like a blind beggar begging, *Date obolum Belizario*, give one halfpenny for poor Belizarius. Before the fall, man was the favourite of heaven, but after the fall he was presently made a slave of hell, his will was deflowered, then his eyes were pulled out, so that now having little knowledge and little wisdom even to guide ourselves in a moral course, the passions rebel against reason, and many times man is not only tempted, but drawn aside by his own lusts, and enticed, James i. 14. Nay, many times the body riseth up in arms against the soul. Paul groans because of a law in his members, Rom. vii. 23. Oh what a poor disordered routed creature man is! body and soul all discomposed and out of order.

6. There is a loss to us by the disorder of nature, and by the distempering of the creature. Man by the fall lost *imperium sui*, the command of himself, and *imperium suum*, his command over the creatures; they are enemies to man because he hath rebelled against God. If ever we find them hurtful and rebellious, we may thank ourselves, they do but revenge their maker's quarrel. They think it is their duty to turn off their allegiance from him that hath proved a traitor to God, therefore they sometimes oppress us with their power and greatness. It is usual with God to execute his judgments by the creature: Pharoah and the Egyptians were drowned in the sea; the earth opened to swallow up Korah and his company; the stars fought against Sisera; Herod was eaten up with lice; Egypt devoured with frogs. Therefore the vanity of the creature is a loss to us; there is not only an enmity between them one among another, but they have lost their allegiance to man. Nay, they are ready to go if the Lord do but hiss for them. Job xxxviii. 35, 'Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?' The lightnings say unto God, Here we are; the winds say, Shall we go and blast their fruits and trees? here we are, Lord, send us. The clouds say, Shall we pour out in abundance, and overwhelm the earth? Isa. vii. 18, 'The Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.' It is an expression that sets forth the power of God over the creatures. If God do but signify his pleasure, they are very ready to avenge their creator's quarrel against man.

The second circumstance in the creation is the instrument or means by which all things were created, and that is, 'By the word of God.'

Here a question ariseth, what is meant by the word of God? whether that which they call God's external imperial word, or whether God's essential and substantial word? The reason of the doubt is, because God made all things by Christ, and Christ is often called the word. It is his solemn title, and that in reference to the creation: John i. 1, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God; ' and ver. 3, 'By him were all things created.' And Heb. i. 2, 'He hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' So that Jesus Christ is the eternal word. I shall answer this doubt in these propositions.

1. It is very true that the second person, the Lord Jesus Christ, had a great stroke in the creation: Ps. xxxiii. 6, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.' There is the whole trinity; there is the Lord, and the word of the Lord, and there is the breath of his mouth; that is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Prov. viii. 22, 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.' There is Christ's eternity, and his hand and power in the creation: ver. 23, 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; ' that is, in the first emanation of his power, Christ was then discovered: John i. 3, 'By him were all things made that were made.' Col. i. 16, 'By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth.' Probably this may be held forth in that speech ten times repeated: 'The Lord said, the Lord spake.' Nay some of the Jews acknowledge an uncreated word in all those expressions. Philo saith, ὁ λόγος τὸν κόσμον ἐποιησεν. And it is not to be disregarded, that the Chaldee paraphrase makes the word to be God himself.

2. Yet, besides this essential word, it is clear that we must understand also his imperial word, or the word of his command; so it is interpreted, Ps. xxxiii. 9, 'He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.' Here was God's imperial word. So Ps. cxlviii. 5, 'He commanded, and they were created.' God did create the world by his call and imperial word. So Rom. iv. 17, 'He believed in God, who quickened the dead, and called things that be not, as though they were,' that is, by a call he maketh them be. Moses bringeth in God speaking imperially, 'Let it be.'

3. This imperial word must not be understood properly as if God spake; as if there were an audible voice, 'Let there be light; ' but it must be understood ἀνθρωπωπαθῶς, after the manner of men. It is an allusion to princes, if they would have anything done, they do but say, Let it be done, that is enough; as the centurion in the Gospel, Mark viii. 9, 'I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' When God said, 'Let it be,' he did but signify his will, and the effect presently did follow. So that by the word of God you must understand the effectual decree of his will concerning the making of all the creatures, and the present execution of it. And this manner of speaking is used to show with what swiftness and easiness all things were brought to pass which God willeth, and that it is infinitely more easy with God to do

what he pleaseth, than for man to speak a word, or think a thought of what he would have to be done.

Quest. Here is another question. If nothing is to be understood but God's will, and willing the creation of all things? then whether the making of the world in six days be only for our understanding, or whether it be so really and indeed; whether all things were not created in the twinkling of an eye by God's will and pleasure; or whether it were done by distinct days, as the history in Genesis seems to intimate? The doubt hath been moved by divines of the greatest note. Austin expressly was of this opinion; so Cajetan, and some among the reformed; their reason is, because God is omnipotent, and could make all things in a moment, therefore why should he make such a slow progress, and go from day to day? And the author of Ecclesiasticus saith, 'He that liveth for ever, made all things at once.' They quote scripture for it: Gen. ii. 4, 5, 'In the day that God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.'—in that very day say they, when God created the heaven and the earth, he created all the other creatures. And they say that the mentioning of the six days was only inserted by Moses, because by so many distinctions and representations God showed his creatures to the angels, and to declare the natural dependence of all things upon one another, and also for our incapacity to conceive distinctly of things at once.

Ans. But all this is but a figment and gross supposition without the scripture. Though God could make all things in a moment, yet we must not reason from God's power to God's will, nor instruct him how to bring forth his work: Rom. xi. 34, 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?' And for that place, Gen. ii. 4, 5, 'In the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens,' &c., some answer thus: It is true they were all made, *potentia*, in power, though not *actu*, actually in one day. Or rather the word day must be twice repeated: in the day that God made the heavens and the earth; and in the day that God made the plants, &c, for day there is taken more largely for time. But to confirm you in the history of Moses, it is plain that God made the world in that order; there are these apparent reasons for it—

[1.] If God made the world all at once, how could Moses with truth put down such a distinct commendation of every day's work?

[2.] Moses wrote historically, therefore his words must be properly understood.

[3.] Why should he say, God made light before the firmament and stars, if we go to natural dependence and order? It should be first the firmament, then the stars, then light. Therefore it is certain Moses followed that order in his history, that God observed in the production of all things.

[4.] If all creatures were thus created together, how could there be darkness upon the face of the deep? And how could the earth be said to be without form and void? Then it would have plants and beasts, if all were made together.

[5.] The reason of the sabbath would be to no purpose; how could Moses say with truth, Therefore the sabbath must be sanctified, because

God rested the seventh day? Therefore we may conclude, that though the effect followed as soon as God willed it, yet God willed the creation of all things in order; such a creature this day, and such a creature the next day.

Use 1. It helpeth us to conceive of the creation, all things were done by his word according to his will. The Gnostics feigned the aspectable world was made by the angels; but the scripture is plain: 2 Peter iii. 5, ‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.’ He made them all without help and without labour; no creature, no instrument was serviceable to him in it; all was infinitely more easy to God than the conceiving of a thought can be to yourselves.

Use 2. Here is much comfort and profit to you.

1. Much comfort to poor souls that are smitten with remorse, and touched with a deep sense of their misery and wretched and sinful condition by nature. Usually, at first conversion, you may observe men have such a strong sense of the present evils and distempers of their spirits, that they are apt to sink under the burden of their discouragements, and to say, surely this hard heart will never be softened! this blind mind will never be enlightened! these stubborn affections will never be subdued and mortified! Consider the first creation when you expect the new creation. Think of the power of him that can call the things that are not, as though they were; one creating word is enough. Compare the benefit of the first creation and the second together: 2 Cor. iv. 6, ‘God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your hearts,’ &c. In the original it is ὁ εἰπών—he that spoke light out of darkness, by his word he could bring it forth presently; he can speak light to our souls, though there were nothing but darkness, confusion and disorder. You may go to God as the oenturion, Mat. viii. 8, ‘Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.’ So do you say, Lord, speak but the word, then my soul shall be clean. It is observable that Jesus Christ, when he would discover any notable effects, he speaketh creating words; as ‘Be thou clean;’ ‘Be thou made whole;’ ‘Follow me;’ ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ How may a poor soul go to God when he is thus discouraged, and say, Speak light out of darkness, speak grace, O Lord, one word is enough, thou canst easily reach the bottom of the electing faculty.

2. It is of great use to encourage believers to wait for the accomplishment of the promises. Every promise rightly understood is a creating word. When God saith that he will make them perfect to every good work, it is as much as if he said, Be thou perfect, be thou justified, be thou sanctified, be thou enabled to every work of holiness, be thou glorified. When he saith, ‘It is your Father’s pleasure to give you a kingdom,’ to make you able to every good work, to keep you by his power to salvation, he hath signified his pleasure, and that is enough to assure us it shall be effected. Look upon the word of God in creation as a pledge of the accomplishment of the promises. We doubt, because we are ignorant of the power of God’s word. Your unbelief would be much abated if you would consider his creating the world,—how God could bring all things out of nothing. All the creatures are looking-glasses, that we may read what God can do by his word; in them his

sufficiency and efficacy are proposed to us to behold. When we have nothing left us but a promise, we may see all things in it. If God hath made heaven by his word, he can give thee heaven, and make good his promises by his word. God's word is the foundation of the creature's being, and the foundation of your faith. If heaven could be made and prepared by the word of his power, certainly the promises will be accomplished and made good to your souls, and you shall be brought to heaven by the word of his truth.

The third and last circumstance is the matter, or rather term, from which God's work began ; there was no prejacent or pre-existent matter. It is a note of form and order ; *ex nihilo*, that is, *post nihilum*—‘So that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear.’ The words have undergone variety of constructions. Calvin, leaving out the preposition, rendereth it, *Ut non apparentium spectacula fierent*, making it parallel with Rom. i. 20, ‘For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.’ But this is to force the grammatical construction. Some understand by ‘things not seen,’ the idea or module of all things in the divine mind ; but this is to bring down the apostle's language to the doctrine of the school of Plato. Some understand the chaos, and that the apostle alludeth to the translation of the Septuagint of what is in the original, ‘And the earth was without form, and void,’ Gen. i. 2, the Septuagint renders ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀπαρασκεύαστος—The earth was invisible and unprepared. This may be in part respected here, for ‘darkness was upon the face of the deep ;’ and so it may well be called, ‘things not appearing.’ Rather by τὰ μὴ φανόμενα you may understand τὰ μὴ ὄντα—out of nothing. And the word was suited with the apostle's scope, which is to prove that faith contents itself with the word of God, though nothing be seen ; that which was not at all could not be seen. Though these two latter expositions may be compounded, all things were made either immediately by God out of nothing, or immediately out of the chaos.

Quest. But here may be a doubt : How did God make all things out of nothing, since man was made of the dust of the earth ? and all things were made out of the chaos, the first mass and lump that was without form ? I answer, There is a double creation : out of nothing, and out of that which is as good as nothing.

1. There is a creation out of mere nothing ; so the Lord framed many things, as the heaven of heavens, the dwelling-place of God and angels, and the spirits of blessed men. He could not make that from the earth and water, for that was not. So the chaos, or the earth that was void and without form, God made that out of nothing. And God made light out of nothing—‘He commanded light to shine out of darkness,’ 2 Cor. iv. 6. So the angels, and the souls of men, which were breathed into them by the breath of God : Gen. ii. 7, ‘God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.’ God made all these out of mere nothing.

2. God made some things out of foregoing matter, which is yet called a creation, because the matter was altogether indisposed and unfit for such a use. There was no disposition in the matter to receive

such a shape as God bestowed upon it; the form was merely from the power of God, as the firmament was made out of the water: Ps. civ. 3, 'He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters,' that is, the firmament, which was made by the rarefaction and expansion of the waters. So the sun, moon, and stars were made out of the first light; for either it was annihilated or it yet remaineth. Annihilated it could not be, for the wise God made nothing but for some end, and we do not read that he abolished anything he had made; therefore it remaineth dispersed in the sun, moon, and stars, otherwise what is the use of it? Fishes were made out of the waters: Gen. i. 20, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.' Birds were made out of the earth, and so beasts: Gen. ii. 19, 'And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.' The body of man was made out of the dust of the ground; Gen. ii. 7, 'And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground;' and the woman was taken out of the man: Gen. ii. 22, 'And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman.'

Use. God by this would teach the world what to think of him. He created the world out of mere nothing, or out of matter not prepared; he created them wholly by his word, having no partaker with him. The great thing that we should learn hence is God's power. That you may consider it with profit, I shall lay down a few propositions.

1. Power is one of God's greatest perfections; that serves most for the comfort of the creature. It is love to make a promise; truth to regard his promise; and it is his power that makes good his promise. The warrant of our faith is the truth of God; but the proper ground of our faith is the power and sufficiency of God. When the apostle speaks of Abraham that was the father of the faithful, his faith is bottomed and founded on God's power; he believed that God was able to do it: Rom. iv. 21, 'Being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.' This is the proper ground of our faith, that God is every way sufficient to make good his promise. It is the prime perfection of God; for it is the power of God that maketh all other the perfections of God valid and effectual for the comfort of poor creatures. Therefore may we receive comfort from his mercy, because he is able to show mercy; therefore may we depend upon his goodness and truth, because it is seconded with the power and all-sufficiency of God: Eph. iii. 20, 'He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.'

2. In the creation there is no attribute so eminent as God's power. There was wisdom and goodness shown in the creation, but the main attribute is power. God's wisdom and his goodness appear in the creation, as they exist in created things; but God's infinite power is in himself. Therefore, when the apostle speaks of the knowledge of heathens, Rom. i. 20, he saith in the creation was manifested 'his eternal power and godhead.' That was the principal thing discovered in the work of creation: Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches,' &c.

3. We must not only with a naked, idle speculation reflect upon

God's power but improve it to the uses of religion, as to fear and to trust.

[1.] To fear : Ps. xxxiii. 8, 'Let all the earth fear the Lord ; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him ;' Job xxxvii. 23, 24, 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out ; he is excellent in power . . . men do therefore fear him.' We should have a dread of God because of such power. Who would not fear to enter into the lists with him ? By sins committed against God you draw omnipotency about your ears. Would you engage the mighty God against you ? There are two causes of carnal compliance : we presume of God's mercy, and fear man's power. To check it, consider God is able by the rebuke of his countenance to turn us to nothing, that made us out of nothing.

[2.] Improve it to trust. In all your straits and exigencies, when nothing appears, then wait upon the Lord ; he can create means when he finds none ; he can produce all possible things into act, or leave them still in the womb of nothing. He can do you good by contrary means ; as Christ cured the blind man's eyes by clay and spittle, by that which seemed to put them out.

SERMON XII.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.—HEB. xi. 4.

THE apostle cometh to illustrate the properties of faith by the special experiences of the saints. He begins with Abel.

But you will say, Why doth he pass by Adam, the first man, and the first believer in the world ? For four reasons.

1. Because Abel was the first persecuted man for righteousness, by Cain professing the same worship : whereas Adam lived a quiet life, without assault and molestation. And so it suits with the apostle's scope, which is to embolden believers against troubles and persecutions for Christ's sake. Here was the first instance of the distinction of men, Cain and Abel, brothers born of the same womb ; nay, which is more, supposed to be twins of the same birth ; yet one the seed of the woman, and the other the seed of the serpent. Therefore Abel is fitly propounded as the first pattern of faith ; as Cain was the patriarch of unbelievers, as Tertullian calls him. And the apostle says, Jude 11, 'They have gone in the way of Cain.' This was an early instance of the enmity between the seeds, and the first pledge of the spite and malice which carnal men do now manifest against the children of God because of the old hatred. Adam was the first sinner, but Cain the first murderer. Therefore the apostle doth well begin with Abel, who was the first-fruits of the faithful ; in him the envy and malignity of

the world began to taste the blood of martyrs, and ever since it is glutted with it.

2. Because Abel was the first person that was never in a possibility to be saved by any other way than that of faith. Adam had other means propounded to him at first in the covenant of works, and therefore he is passed by, and Abel is fitly represented as the first evangelical believer.

3. After the fall, Moses speaks nothing notable of Adam. Though he was received to grace, yet God did not put that honour upon him which he did upon some of his posterity. And because of his great unthankfulness, he having received so much, therefore he is passed by, and not propounded to the church as one of the glorious witnesses and examples of faith. Observe from hence the scandalous falls of God's children are of dangerous consequence. Though the wound be cured, yet there are some scars remain; and though free grace makes them vessels of mercy, yet it doth not use and employ them as vessels of honour. There are more than probabilities of Adam's faith, yet it is not famous in the church. The apostle beginneth with Abel.

4. Because Abel was a special type of Jesus Christ. He was a type of him in his temporal calling: Gen. iv. 2, 'Abel was a keeper of sheep.' *πρωτοποιμῆν*—the first shepherd; so Jesus Christ is *ἀρχιποιμῆν*—the chief shepherd of our souls; Heb. xiii. 10, 'The great shepherd of the sheep.' And so also he was a type of him in his righteousness and innocency. It is notable that Abel is seldom spoken of in scripture, but he is honoured with this appellation, 'righteous Abel.' Moses is spoken of for meekness, Phinehas for zeal, but Abel for righteousness: Mat. xxiii. 35, 'From the blood of righteous Abel,' &c. And this the apostle might intend in part when he saith in the text, 'By which he obtained witness that he was righteous;' that is, he is spoken of in the scriptures and in the church of God as righteous; and herein he was a type of Christ: 1 John ii. 1, 'Jesus Christ the righteous.' Then again, in his death, Abel came to sacrifice, and solemnly to remember Christ, and that provoked Cain's envy. The offering of the lamb did not only signify the shedding of Christ's blood, but Abel himself is made a type of the death of Jesus Christ. Abel is slain by the envy of Cain; so was Jesus Christ by the envy of the priests and his malignant Jewish brethren: Mat. xxvii. 18, 'He knew that for envy they had delivered him.' Envy slew Abel and betrayed Christ. There was only this difference between the blood of Christ and the blood of Abel: the blood of Abel called to God for vengeance upon the murderer, and the blood of Christ for mercy even upon his persecutors—mercy for unthankful men. Therefore the apostle saith, Heb. xii. 24, the blood of Christ 'speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Abel's blood crieth thus to the Lord, Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance upon murderous Cain! Christ's blood cries, Pardon! pardon! Father, be appeased, be merciful to these poor sinners! Thus you see from the very cradle of the world there were presignifications of Christ, not only in things, but in persons. The sacrifice and sacrificer both represented Christ, who was both priest and offering: Abel's lamb signified Christ, the 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' Now to show that God would not be appeased with any irrational offering, Abel himself was to be sacrificed, as well as his sacrifice; Jesus Christ the priest himself

is to be slain. God did teach the old church by persons as well as things, to signify not only the satisfaction of Christ, but the person of Christ, ‘Who by the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,’ Heb. ix. 14.

We have seen the reasons why the apostle beginneth with Abel; let us hear what is said of him—‘By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.’

In which words these things are considerable—(1.) Abel’s action; (2.) The consequents, or fruits of it.

1. Abel’s action—*He offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.* In that you have three circumstances—

[1.] The principle or root of it—*By faith.*

[2.] The nature of it—*He offered sacrifice.*

[3.] The comparative excellency—πλείονα θυσίαν παρὰ Καΐν; that is, *He offered a better sacrifice than that which Cain offeerd.*

2. You have the consequents of the whole work; they are two—

[1.] There is a testimony.

[2.] A special privilege.

(1.) A testimony, the inward testimony of his person—*By it he obtained witness that he was righteous.* The outward testimony of this performance—*God testifying of his gift.*

(2.) The special privilege by it—*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*

I shall begin with the explication of the necessary circumstances of Abel’s action, and inquire—(1.) What was the occasion of this sacrifice? (2.) What was the warrant of this sacrifice? (3.) Wherein lies the excellency of it above that of Cain? (4.) What kind of faith this is that the apostle intends, when he saith, ‘By faith he offered,’ &c.

First. What was the special occasion of this sacrifice? That may be gathered out of the phrase used: Gen. iv. 3, ‘And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.’ In process of time, or as it is in the margin, at the end of days; in the original it is, מְקֻעַ וּמִימָ—at the end of the year, or revolution of days. The Hebrews are wont to reckon their time by days, as being the more natural distinction. Years are more artificial, and depend upon the institution of man; and therefore is the term day so often used for time in scripture. Now God hath taught Adam by revelation, and he his son by instruction, that men should at the year’s end, in a solemn manner, sacrifice with thanks to God, when they had gathered in the fruits of the earth. This tradition was afterwards made a written law: Exod. xxii. 29, ‘Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors; the first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.’ It was an order then newly inforced, though it had been observed from the beginning of the world; so Exod. xxiii. 16, ‘And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.’ The very heathens themselves did by tradition derive and propagate this custom one to another, for among other things they retained it, even in their darkest ignorance. I remember, Aristotle in his ‘Ethnics’ (lib. viii., chap. 8.) hath such a passage as this, *Αἱ γὰρ ἀρχαῖαι θυσίαι καὶ σύνοδαι φαίνονται γένεσθαι*

μετὰ τὰς τῶν καρπῶν συγκομιδας—That all the ancient meetings and sacrifices were wont to be after the gathering in of the first-fruits, that they might distribute the due portion of the increase of their fields to the gods; so that at the end of days, when the year was run round, and the vintage and harvest-time was past, they were to come in token of thankfulness, and present the first-fruits unto the Lord. In short, these solemn sacrifices at the end of days had a double end and use.

1. To be a figure of the expiation promised to Adam in Christ.
2. To be a solemn acknowledgment of their homage and thankfulness to God.

[1.] The general use of these sacrifices was to remember the seed of the woman, or Messiah to come, as the solemn propitiatory sacrifice of the church. And indeed there was a notable resemblance between those offerings and Jesus Christ: Abel offered a lamb; and Christ is ‘the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,’ John i. 29. And because of these early sacrifices, therefore is that expression used, Rev. xiii. 8, ‘The Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world;’ that is, slain in types, sacrifices, and presignifications. And he also is the first-fruits: Ps. lxxxix. 27, ‘I will make him to be my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,’ saith God, speaking of Christ. Col. i. 15, ‘He is the first-born of every creature;’ and the first-begotten: Heb. i. 6, ‘Again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world.’ Christ is called the first-born and the first-begotten, partly in regard of the eternity of his person—it was without beginning, before the world was—and partly because of the excellency of his person, he being more glorious than angels or men. Though God had other children by creation besides Christ, yet he is the first-born. What shall we gather from hence?

Doct. That in all our addresses to God we must solemnly remember and honour Christ.

In the feast of the first-fruits they were to have an eye to the Messiah that was to come, though he were but darkly revealed. God will have men to ‘honour the Son as they honour the Father,’ John v. 23. We must do duties to God, so as we may honour Christ in them. It may be you will ask, How do we honour Christ in doing of duties?

(1.) When you look for your acceptance in Christ, as Abel comes with a lamb in faith. Adam hid himself, and durst not come into the presence of God till he had received the first promise and intimation of Christ. And truly guilt cannot approach majesty armed with wrath and power without a mediator. The patriarchs were to profess homage, but by sacrifices typing Christ: Ephes. iii. 12, ‘In him we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him.’ Oh, you cannot come with confidence unless you come with a mediator in the arms of faith! Thus must all do that would be accepted of God. When shall we honour Christ in our addresses to God, and lift up a confidence proportionable to his merit? at least come not in your own names.

(2.) This is to honour Christ in duties, when you look for your assistance from the Spirit of Christ. The Lord hath promised to shed abroad his Spirit upon his ascension. You honour God in Christ when

you worship God through Christ: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' You draw nigh to God with more encouragement by expecting the supplies of the Spirit.

(3.) When the aim of the worship is to set up and advance the mediator. This was the solemn drift of the patriarchs, and the general intention of all their sacrifices—to look to the promised seed; and therefore the parts of their worship did exactly resemble the mediatory actions of Christ. In all the worship of the gospel, in your thoughts you must not only advance God, but lift up the mediator. When the apostle compares the worship of the christian with that of the Gentiles, he saith, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, 'There are gods many, and lords many, (many mediators) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. This is the right frame of a christian's heart in all his addresses: he looks up to one Lord as the fountain of mercy, and the ultimate object of worship, and one mediator. We must look to him as the conveyance and golden-pipe of mercy, by whom all blessings descend to us, and through him all our prayers ascend to God. This is to honour the mediator; to make Christ the means, and God the object and last end.

[2.] The special use of this worship was to profess their homage and their thankfulness to God. They were to come as God's tenants, and pay him their rent. Therefore God puts words into the Israelites' mouths: Deut. xxvi, 10, 'I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me.' The note from hence is,

Doct. That in the times of our increase and plenty we must solemnly acknowledge God.

The best way to secure the farm, and keep it in our possession, is to acknowledge the great landlord of the whole world—Lord, I have been a poor creature, and thou hast blest me wonderfully. There is a rent of praise and a thank-offering due to God. As Jacob acknowledgeth God thus, Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become two bands.' Thus we should come with a rent of praise, and with a thanksgiving to the Lord. But alas! how few think of this? We offer to him our lusts, but do not come with our thanksgiving to God. *Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt*—Those that have received most blessings from God forget the great landlord of the world. We are *Canistæ*, as Luther calls such of Cain's sect, because we do grudge God a little when he hath given us abundance: 1 Cor. xvi. 2, 'Upon the first day of the week let every man lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.' These offer according to their calling; Cain comes as a husbandman, and Abel as a keeper of the sheep. Consider, the first fruits sanctified and blessed the whole lump: Rom. xi. 16, 'For if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy.' When you give God his portion, you can the better take comfort in what is left.

Secondly, The second question is, What was the warrant of this worship? Was it devised according to their own will, or was it commanded by God? The reason of the inquiry is because the papists

say that before the law the patriarchs did, without any command, out of their private good intention, offer sacrifice to God ; and they prove it, because the gentiles that were not acquainted with the institutions of the church used the same way of worship. But this opinion seemeth little probable,—

1. Because this is above the light of corrupt nature to prescribe an acceptable worship to God. Corrupt nature will tell us indeed that God is to be worshipped ; but for the manner, God himself must prescribe it ; for the gentiles might take up the way of sacrifice by tradition, or by perverse imitation, through the instigation of the devil, who would be worshipped the same way God was.

2. It was by some appointment ; for no worship is acceptable to him but that which is of his appointment. You know the solemn profession of God against will-worship in scripture—‘Who hath required this at your hands ?’ Isa. i. 12. God will always be his own carver, and not leave his worship to the allotment of corrupt nature. He appointeth what he will accept.

3. There could have been else no faith nor obedience in it, if the institution had been wholly humane ; there is no faith without some promise of divine grace, no obedience without some command. And Cain would not have been culpable for any defect in the worship, if it had been left to his own will ; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

4. The wonderful agreement that is between this first act of solemn worship and the solemn constitutions of the Jewish church, doth wonderfully evince it (as we shall prove by and by), that there was some rule and divine institution according to which this worship was to be regulated, which, probably, God revealed to Adam, and he taught it, as he did other parts of religion, to his children : therefore it was done by virtue of an institution. Abel looked to the command of God, and promise of God, that so he might do it in faith and obedience.

The note from this—

Doct. That whatever is done in worship must be done out of conscience, and with respect to the institution.

Quest. But you will say, What is it to do a thing by virtue of an institution ? For answer—

[1.] I shall show you what an institution is. Every word of institution consists of two parts—the word of command, and the word of promise. To instance in any duty of worship : in hearing the word, Isa. iv. 3, ‘Hear, and your souls shall live ;’ in the sacrament—‘Do this ;’ there is the word of command ; then ‘This is my body and blood ;’ there is the word of promise. In baptism : Acts ii. 38, ‘Be baptized, every one of you ;’ there is the word of command ; ‘For the remission of sins ;’ there is the word of promise. God doth not require duty merely out of sovereignty, but in mercy. In the law it is sometimes a motive—Do thus and thus, for I am the Lord ; God’s sovereignty is pleaded. In other places—Do thus, and this shall be your life ; there is the promise ; and this will do you good. It is the condescension of God to require no duty but for your profit—‘You shall not seek my face in vain.’ Duty is not a task, but a means ; he en-

courageth, when he might transact all things by way of charge and imperial command. God that requireth worship, doth also reward it; precepts and promises go hand in hand. Christianity is famous for pure precepts and excellent rewards. God's services will not be uncomfortable; for all his institutions are made up of a word of command and a word of promise.

[2.] What is it to do a duty in respect to the institution? I answer, it is to do it in faith and obedience: faith respects the word of promise, obedience the word of command. Customary approaches bring God no honour and glory; therefore first the command must be the reason of the duty. Then the promise must be the encouragement, the *ratio formalis*—the formal reason of all duty and obedience, is God's command; and the *ratiomotiva*, the moving and persuasive reason, is our own profit and God's promise. Obedience to the command is my homage, and faith one of the purest respects I can yield to God.

Ques. But now how shall I know when I do duty in faith and obedience? I answer—

(1.) You come in obedience when the command is the main motive and reason upon your spirit to put you upon the duty. It is enough to a christian to say, 'This is the will of God,' 1 Thes. v. 18. The bare sight of God's will is enough. It is custom to do as others do, but religion to do what God commands, because God hath commanded: Exod. xii. 26, 27, 'It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover.' Ask your heart, Why do I pray and hear? The Lord our God hath commanded it. Now this will be evident to you by your continuing in duties, though the success be not presently visible. The soul is of Peter's temper: Luke v. 4, 5, saith Christ, 'Let down your net for a draught.' Alas! 'Master (saith Peter) we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; howbeit at thy word I will let down the net.' So the soul encourageth itself, I have had no sensible communion with God, yet I must perform my duty; I will do what God hath commanded, let God do what he will; success is God's act, duty mine. Then you come in obedience to the performance of any holy service.

(2.) Would you know when you come in faith? when you look to the word of promise? You may know that by the earnest expectation and considerateness of the soul. Those that come customarily do not look to the end of the service, nor why God hath appointed it. It is said, Ps. xxxii. 9, 'Be ye not as the horse and mule, which have no understanding;' that is, to go on without consideration. Man is to work for an end, to design somewhat, especially in duties of worship, which are the most serious and important affairs of our whole lives. Therefore what do you look for in your worship? Many look to the work wrought, but not to the end. God's institutions are under a blessing; and there must be an actual waiting, or you do not come in faith. And you will know this by the importunateness of your souls in pressing God with his word. Ah, Lord! thou hast made a promise to those that wait upon thee that thou wilt bless them; now 'remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope,' Ps. cxix. 49. By this you may try your hearts.

Thirdly, The third question is, Wherein lies the difference between the two sacrifices? Some place it only in the acceptation of God as if the sense were, Abel offered *gratiorem*, a more acceptable sacrifice, better in God's esteem; but in the original it is *πλειονα*, more sacrifice; *uberiorem*, saith Erasmus, a larger, a more plenteous, *majoris pretii*, a more excellent and a more beseeming sacrifice. It was better, not only in God's esteem, but in its own worth and value.

Briefly, there is a threefold difference between Abel's and Cain's sacrifice.

1. In the faith of Abel. Abel's principle was faith, Cain's distrust. The one came in faith, looking to the promised seed, and so the duty was effectual for his comfort and encouragement, he was accepted with God; the other came to it as to a dead ceremony and task against his will, a superficial rite of no use and comfort. That which is done in faith pleaseth God, otherwise it is but an idle rite and naked ceremony. God looks for habitual faith; but in all that proceed to a justified state he looks for actual faith, without which our sacrifices are but an abomination to him; Prov. xxi. 27. 'The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination,' how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind. Though a wicked man bring it with the most advantage, with good intentions, yet it is an abomination; much more if he bring it with a carnal aim and a grudging spirit and evil mind, as Cain did. But of this hereafter.

2. The second difference lay in the willing mind of Abel. Abel came with all his heart, and in a free manner, to perform worship to God; and he brought the best, the fattest, and costliest sacrifice he could, as far as the bounds of God's institution would give him leave. But Cain came with a sullen, covetous, unthankful, and fleshly spirit; he thought whatever he brought was good enough for God. Cain was envious to God before he was envious to his brother; he offered with a grudging mind whatever came first to hand, but kept the first-fruits to himself. Cain looked upon his sacrifice as a task rather than a duty; his fruits were brought to God as a mulct and fine rather than an offering, as if an act of worship had been an act of penance, and religion was his punishment. Note from hence—the worth of duties lies much in the willing mind of those that perform them.

[1.] There must be the mind. God doth not require ours, but us. Abel brought his lamb, and himself too; but Cain offered not himself, he brought only his offering. God would have us, when we come to him, to bring ourselves; though he need us not, yet we have need of him. The Lord complains that they did not bring themselves: Jer. xxix. 13, 'Ye shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart.' This is right Cain's trick, to bring God our gift, and not ourselves.

[2.] The mind must be willing and free. Probably that which did put Cain upon duty was the awe of his parents, or the rack of his own conscience; therefore he would do something to satisfy the custom. He would bring of the fruits, and there was all, but was unmindful of what God had done for him, and distrustful how God would reward him. Many are of Cain's spirit; we think all is loss that is laid out upon God, and therefore do not come readily: Ps. cxix. 108, 'Accept,

I beseech thee, the free-will offering of my mouth, O Lord.' All your duties should be free-will offerings. A christian should have no other constraint upon him but love : 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' The devil rules the world by enforcement and a servile awe, and so captivates the blind nations ; but God will rule by the sceptre of love. God would have his people a willing people. Their heart shall be their own law. In all our addresses to God we should come to him upon the wings of joy and holy delight.

3. The third difference is in the matter offered. It is said of Cain's offering, Gen. iv. 3, 'That he brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.' The Holy Ghost purposely omits the description of the offering. Being hastily taken, and unthankfully brought, it is mentioned without any additional expression to set off the worth of them ; it should have been the first and the fairest. But for Abel, see how distinct the Spirit of God is in setting forth his offering : ver. 4, 'And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof ;' not only the firstlings, that the rest might be sanctified, but he brought the best, the chiefest, the fattest. All these were afterwards appropriated to God : Lev. iii. 16, 17, 'All the fat is the Lord's.' Now observe from hence—

Doct. That when we serve God, we must serve him faithfully, with our best.

It is a high dishonour and contempt to God when we bring him a contemptible offering, and think anything is good enough for God: Mal. i. 14, 'Cursed is the deceiver, that hath a male in his flock, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing ; for I am a great king,' &c. When we do not offer God the flower and spirit of our souls, we reflect a dishonour upon God. Our duties are so to be ordered that they may argue a proportionable reverence and dread of God. Alexander would be painted by none but Apelles, and carved by none but Lysippus. Domitian would not have his statue made but in gold or silver. God, the great king, will be served with the best of our affections. When we care not what we offer to God, how will he accept us? How shall he esteem that which we do not esteem ourselves? Cain's offering was not so much an oblation as a refusal, a casting off ; a rejection of that which was not fit to be reserved for himself, he gives it to God. It must needs displease God, since it could not please himself : in short, God must have the best of our time, and the best of our parts.

[1.] God must have the best of our time. Consider, we can afford many sacrilegious hours to our lusts, and can scarce afford God a little time without grudging. Is not there too much of Cain's spirit in this? We adjourn and put off the work of religion to the aches of old age: when we have scarce any vigour, any strength of affections left, oh ! then we will worship God. We devote to Satan the flower of our lively youth, and fresh age, and adjourn to God the rottenness and dregs of our old age : Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' Why?—because the prints of God's creating power are then more fresh in our natures, and we have a fairer experience of God's creating goodness than in age. Then is the fittest season to estimate

the benefits of our creation. Old age are the days in which we have no pleasure; these are our fresh, choicest days, full of contentment.

[2.] With your best parts. You come to worship God not only with your bodies, but your souls, with the refined strength of your reason and thoughts: Ps cviii. 1, 'I will sing and give praise even with my glory.' If David had anything he called his glory, God should have it.

Application to the sacrament. You have heard of Cain and Abel, in what they agreed, and in what they differed. They agreed in the general action—both drew near to God, and worshipped; in the general nature of that action—they both brought an offering; in the general kind of that offering, which was of that which belonged to each of them; Cain, a tiller of the ground, brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel, a keeper of sheep, brought of his flock, Gen. iv. 3, 4. They differed thus—one offered in faith, the other not: they differed in the matter of sacrifice—Abel brought the first and fattest; of Cain it is only said he brought an offering: they differed in acceptance. Now this sheweth you—

1. What you are to do in the Lord's supper.
2. What to expect.

1. What you are to do. Offer to God in the most beseeming manner what will become the majesty of God, the love of Christ, your faith in him and love to him. If you have anything better than another, let God have it. But you will say, What is this to the Lord's supper, where we do not come to offer, but to receive; not to offer sacrifice but to receive a sacrament; not to feast God, but to be feasted by him?

Ans. [1.] There is a difference between sacraments and sacrifice, but they have a mutual relation one to the other. A sacrament implieth a sacrifice. The only sacrifice to please God was that of Christ, who offered up himself through the eternal Spirit to God. Christ offered the sacrifice to please God; and being appeased by Christ, be offereth his gifts to us; as Esau, when reconciled to Jacob, offered him gifts, Gen. xxxiii. 15.

[2.] Though we do not offer a sacrifice, yet we remember a sacrifice offered for us; and therefore it teacheth us how to be rightly conversant about such a duty. The use of the sacrifices was—(1.) To exercise brokenness of heart: Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart.' I deserved to die, tormented by the wrath of God. (2.) To testify faith in the satisfaction and sacrifice of the messiah that was to come, and to seek reconciliation with God by him, Lev. i. 3. (3.) To express their hearty thankfulness to God, and desire to please him and walk with him in a course of true obedience: Ps. l. 5, 'Gather my saints together unto me; those which have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Now, if we would come as Abel, and not as Cain, thus must we do: broken-hearted sinners must remember Christ, and apply him to the comfort of their souls, and make use of this duty to that end.

[3.] Though it be no sin-offering, yet it is a thank-offering. This in the text was in part so. There are eucharistical as well as ilastical sacrifices, as most of the sacrifices under the law: Heb. xiii. 15,

'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' Hereby you bind yourselves to obedience and thankfulness : Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

2. What we are to expect—a testimony that we are righteous—some witness from God of the acceptance of our persons and gifts, not extraordinary by fire from heaven, but by the Holy Ghost : Mat. iii. 11, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' When the Holy Ghost came down on the apostles, 'there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them,' Acts ii. 3. This spirit we expect : Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' And in token that he is pleased with us in Christ, he feedeth us from his own table.

SERMON XIII.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.—HEB. xi. 4.

In order to the further opening this text, I shall handle three points—

1. That carnal men may join with the people of God in external duties of worship.

2. Though they do join, yet in the performance of them there is a sensible and manifest difference.

3. This different performance ariseth from the influence and efficacy of faith.

Doct. 1. That carnal men may join with the people of God in external duties of worship.

We see in the first worship upon record there is a Cain and an Abel; so in Christ's parable : Luke xviii. 10, 'Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican.' And our Lord saith, Mat. xxvi. 41, 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left;' meaning, the one shall be taken by Christ into heaven, and the other left for devils to be carried into hell. It is wonderfully strange that God should make such a distinction; but much more strange that two persons shall be praying at the throne of grace, the one taken, and the other left. The reasons of this point, why carnal men do join in external duties of worship, may be reduced to three heads—

1. Natural conscience will put men upon worship.

2. Custom will direct to the worship then in use and fashion.

3. Carnal impulses will add force and vigour to the performances.

Take all together, and then you have full account of a natural man's devotion.

First, Natural conscience will put men upon worship. There are some few principles that are escaped out of the ruins of the fall ; as Job's messengers, 'I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' Job i. 16. There is a little common light left to tell us that there is a God, and, by consequence, that this God must be worshipped by the creature. Therefore mere natural conscience may suggest worship, and check for the omission of it ; especially when we are serious, and natural light is clear and undisturbed, and men give their consciences leave to speak out. The very heathens were sensible of the necessity of worship, and often speak of beginning all enterprises with God, and say men must be praying to God if they would have a blessing upon their affairs. The apostle saith, Rom. ii. 14, the heathens had 'the work of the law written upon their hearts ;' that is, the external part of obedience, the outward part of worship, and avoiding gross sins. And the conscience of every natural man is like that of the heathens, only somewhat more enlightened by living in the church. But until they are regenerate they have nothing but the light of nature to guide them, though improved by custom, education and literal instruction ; and whatever they do, they do it out of the dictate of natural conscience. Natural men are loth to be wholly without worship. Conscience, like the stomach, must be filled, and have something to pacify it, lest it should bark at us, and reproach us all the day long. Men must put on the garb of religion, or their own conscience will not let them be quiet. Thoughts will excuse or accuse, though blindly, and with much imperfection ; and though carnal men are slight in their duties, yet duty there must be.

Secondly, Custom will put us upon the worship then in use and practice. Natural conscience will tell us that God is to be worshipped ; but how, it learneth from custom and education : so Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people come ;' that is according to the manner of religion then in fashion, according to the devotion of the times. And therefore carnal men go on coldly in the run and tract of accustomed and practised duties. *Non exploratis rationibus traditionis*, saith Cyprian : they take up duties upon trust, and they look not so much to the reason and nature of worship, as to the custom and practice of it. Cain went up with Abel 'in process of time,' or at the year's end, the stated time of worship ; so do men pray, hear, keep the sabbath according to their light, and when the laws of their country and the awe of their education challenge these duties at their hands : Ephes. ii. 2, 'Ye walked according to the course of this world (*κατ' αἰώνα*, according to the time ; the apostle means in gentile worship, as well as in the vanity of their conversations—'according to the doings, or trade, of Israel,' 2 Chron. xvii. 4. So the Geneva translation and the Hebrew word signifieth.) Men do according to the common trade and rate of duty. All a natural man's religion is but cold conformity to what others practise ; and their worship riseth higher and higher according to the rate of their company and education. That custom hath a main influence upon their acts of devotion and religion is clear, because they do not so much look to the nature of ordinances as to what hath been practised in and about them, and do not regard the reason and occasion of duties so much as use and custom. This is clear by the instance of that case so solemnly propounded : Zech. i. 3,

'Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?' Mark the reason and impulse; for the understanding of which you must know that the Jews in the fifth month kept a day for the temple; for you shall see, 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9, the destruction of the temple happened at that time, therefore every seventh day in the fifth month they kept an anniversary fast in remembrance of the temple; but now they were returned from their captivity, and the temple re-edified, and God's service restored, and yet they make it a solemn case whether they should do it, because they had done it these many years. Men are loth to quit a custom in religion, though the reason of it be gone; for they look more to the practice of men than the nature of the ordinance. As some of our ceremonies were first practised upon special occasion in the primitive church, though others came in afterwards by superstition and corruption, yet when the reason is gone, men would continue the rite, and are loth to quit their old custom, and think worship is suppressed with a vain rite because this is the main principle which puts them upon work, practice, and custom.

Thirdly, Carnal impulses will add force and vigour to the performance. The ordinances of God may conduce to some end that suiteth with corrupt nature, and upon that account and reason men will be earnest and busy.

There are two carnal ends upon which men act in duties of religion —vainglory and secular advantage.

1. Vainglory. Men join with the people of God in actions of worship that they may have occasion to discover their parts with the more applause. The apostle speaks of some that 'preached the gospel out of envy,' Phil. i. 15; to rival the apostle in his esteem, that they might set up their own worth. And that is the reason why the apostle would not have novices or young men called to the office of public teaching: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil,' that is, lest, being unmortified, they should debauch the ordinances of God to the service of their own pride and ambitious affectation. That vainglory is a main principle to put men upon praying, preaching, conference, or any duty wherein there is some exercise of gifts, is clear, because in public duties that are open, and liable to the observance of others, men put forth themselves with the greatest vigour, quickness, and strength; whereas in private addresses to God they are more slight and careless. A christian is best tried and exercised in private and secret intercourses between God and his soul; where they spread their own case before God, there they enjoy most communion with God, therefore there they find most quickening and enlargement. A man cannot so well taste his spirit, and discern the working of it in public addresses, because other men's concernsments and necessities are taken up in prayer, and he cannot be so affected as in his own case. Besides when the address is directly to God, he should have our best, for certainly he bids most for our affections. What is the applause of men to the inward approbation of God, sealed up to us by the testimony of the Spirit? What is vainglory to eternal glory?

2. Another carnal principle is secular aims and advantages. It is the great wisdom of God to mingle our concernsments with his own; else few would mind religion, and exercise their gifts for the benefit of

the church. Carnal fuel keeps in the fire of most men's devotions. I say God hath so coupled our interest with his own, that in duties most are swayed with a carnal bias and secular respect, and they go of their own errand, out of a mere carnal respect, to gratify their private interest, when they pretend most to do God's business; as those that 'followed Christ for the loaves,' John vi. 26. *Quandoquidem panis Christi jam pinguis factus est, &c.*—because Christ's bread is buttered with worldly conveniences, religion hath many to follow it; there are esteem, honour, countenance, maintenance that follow duties of religion, therefore they are merely done with respect to those low and base ends. Duties of the first table are not costly, and most apt to be counterfeited. Christ speaks of some 'that made long prayers to devour widows' houses,' Mat. xxiii. 14. The meaning is, that they might be thought godly and conscientious, and so be intrusted with the estates of widows and orphans, or draw contributions. Many times in holy duties invocation of the name of God is made to serve the concernment of the shop, and religion is pretended to countenance base aims. This is the great difference between a carnal and godly man: the one performs all his civil duties with religious aims; the other performs all his religious duties with secular aims. Self is the main motive of their respects to God; and as they act in their own strength, so to their own ends.

Use 1. It serves to inform us that the bare performance of the duties of religion is no gracious evidence. Cain may sacrifice as well as Abel. A christian is rather tried by his graces than by his duties; and yet this is the usual fallacy, the paralogism and false reason that we put upon our own consciences. We secure ourselves upon no other grounds but this, because we are conversant in holy duties. All the claim and title most men have to heaven is only some external acts of duty; they pray, and hear, and keep the sabbath, as the people used to do: James i. 21, 'Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls.' The word is—*παραλογιζόμενοι*, 'putting a false reasoning upon yourselves. We reason thus, He that hears the word shall be everlastinglly happy: but I am a hearer of the word. Oh! saith the apostle, 'be not hearers only.' And though the premisses come last in sight, yet we hold fast the conclusion, and think ourselves to be in a sure estate; and this is all the ground of our confidence, an act of duty. Mat. vii. 24, the foolish builder represents those that lay the ground of their confidence in bare attendance on religious duties. Foolish men will raise a high Babel of confidence upon the weakest foundation that may be; they are apt to rest upon unwarrantable evidences; they think they must needs be saved because they hear the word and pray in the name of Christ. Do but search what are your evidences and foundations upon which you build. Some live only by guess, and devout aims and conjectures, and never consider upon what terms they stand with God; others content themselves with very slight evidences, and think their hearts are good merely because they practise some external duties. Thou prayest, so many a pharisee; thou worshippest God in the time of the solemn returns of duty, so did Cain; and therefore build not upon these things. But because this is a conceit deeply rooted in our nature, I shall lay down a few convictive propositions.

1. The bare performance of any outward duty is not enough to endear

you to God. God doth not look to the outward acts, but to the frame of the spirit. You may cheat conscience and deceive man by these outward acts of duty, but God is not mocked. When he comes to weigh the action, he doth not consider the fair pretence, but the disposition of the heart: Prov. xvi. 2, 'The Lord weigheth the spirits;' he looks that the aim should be as good as the action, and the principle every way as good as the performance. If we did but go to the balance of the sanctuary and weigh our spirits, we should not be so carnally confident as usually we are. Heathens did regard ἔργον νόμου, Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.'

2. A man may miscarry though he be employed in the highest ministries and duties of religion. You shall see among other things that are pleaded in the day of judgment this is one: Mat. vii. 23, 'We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils;' consider, a man may do great service in the church, and yet come short of heaven; cast out devils, and yet be cast out among devils; a man may not only be a hearer, but a preacher of the word; they may prophesy in Christ's name, and yet he will not own them. O the sad case of such! Like the way-marks set up in high-ways, that direct others to travel, but do not stir themselves; after they have taught others, they themselves are cast-aways: or like those that made Noah's ark to save others, and were drowned themselves in the water: or like the moon which gives light to others, but it hath none rooted in its own body; they may do much service for Christ, yet be in a bad condition.

3. The heart may be somewhat exercised in duty, and yet it is no gracious evidence. There may be an exercise of memory, wit, and invention in and about the service of God, yet all this while the heart not right. Christians are not measured by their gifts, but by their graces. Gifts are for the body, the church; therefore they may be bestowed sometimes upon carnal men, and poured out in a large measure on them: 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 'Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.' Parts make but an empty sound. That is not the more excellent way.

4. There may be some exercise of affection, and yet men may miscarry; as there may be an exercise of joy in duties, and grief in the defect of duties.

[1.] There may be some kind of joy in duties. The stony ground 'received the word with joy,' Mat. xiii. 20. Men, out of a carnal respect, may delight in the ordinances of God. A judicious man may delight in judicious preaching, and take pleasure in the gifts of the minister and the gracefulness of his utterance, when there is no grace in the heart: Ezek. xxxiii. 32, 'Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument. They take delight in the tunable cadency of expressions, but yet 'they hear thy words, and do them not.' Men may delight in the carnal part of ordinances when there is no true, real, and spiritual delight in the soul. There is a higher delight than all this, which seems spiritual, but is not, when a man delights and finds contentment in the exercise of his own gifts rather than in communion with God. There is a secret complacency, a tickling of the heart at the conceit of our own worth, in

the carriage of a duty, when we come off roundly, when parts have their free course and career ; and this not only in public, where we have an advantage to discover our parts with applause, but many times in private intercourses between God and our souls, to which no eye is conscious. When a man is conceited of his gifts and abilities, he may delight in the exercise of them. Whatever we have, the worth of it is known in the exercise ; especially gifts, for they are of the nature of those things that are *πρὸς ἀλλο*, not for enjoyment, but use. Therefore a man that hath a high conceit of his gifts for praying, preaching, and conference may take a carnal delight in the exercise of them. Nature takes delight in the exercise of its own gifts ; as when parts are vigorous, the tongue can speak much and well, invention is quick and fresh. A man feedeth his own pride by the excellency of speech.

[2.] There may be some grief for the defects of duty which yet is not right ; as when the heart is troubled for outward defects rather than inward, for weakness and brokenness of expression rather than deadness of spirit, and we look more to the liveliness and freshness of parts than of graces. It is true God should be served with all we have, with the vigour of parts as well as the exercise of grace ; and therefore it is just matter of grief to a child of God when he cannot have his senses exercised, and nature is not ready to serve grace. But I say when we are only troubled for outward defects, for deficiency or lameness of parts and do not look at the exercise of grace, the heart is not right with God. There may be a great deal of hardness of heart and flatness of affections when parts are quick and fresh, but then the heart is not troubled ; as a man may be copious in confession, and declaim against sin with much ornament and passionateness of speech, and yet he is not touched, though he findeth no acts of spiritual shame and remorse. Should we but confess half so much to man against ourselves as we do against God, and should we implead ourselves at the bar of men as we do at the bar of God, there would be greater exercise of remorse. But we are not ashamed when we represent our case before God. And if a man should be ashamed of the filthiness of his life, it should be rather in confession before God than man ; for man is but his guilty fellow-creature. On the contrary, the heart may be truly affected when the language is troubled and broken, and there may be much vehemency of spirit when we cannot find words to give it vent to God. We read Moses cried to God, and yet of no words he spake, Exod. viii. 12. And the Spirit's assistance is not to give us words, but he helps our infirmities with sighs and groans, Rom. viii. 26. There is a language in sighs and groans ; they make the best melody in the ears of God, even when the speech is troubled and broken.

5. It is not enough to make conscience of the duties that we perform. Natural men may engage in the acts of worship upon the mere enforcement of natural conscience ; as the mariners in their distress ‘called every one upon his God,’ Jonah i. 5 : it is but a carnal principle and impulse. Now because it is a hard matter to distinguish the workings of natural conscience from the workings of grace, I shall give you some notes. When we work out of natural conscience, it may be discerned several ways.

[1.] It usually smites for total omissions, not for spiritual neglects and perfunctory performances. There will be restless accusations in the heart if a man totally omit duty; but the conscience doth not smite for customariness of spirit in praying and hearing.

[2.] Natural conscience works chiefly by the means of slavish fear, by the terror and awe that it impresseth upon the spirit. Faith works by love, but natural conscience works by fear; and so the working of it may be known, because it is altogether from the threatenings in the word, as faith doth from the promises and mercies of God: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' &c. Natural conscience works from hell, and from our own disquiet. Faith carrieth a man out of himself, and casts all his actions and affections into the mould of the word; but carnal men are forced to it by the rack of their own thoughts, and considerations taken from hell and torment. It is true we must believe the threatenings of the word as well as the promises: but love hath the greatest stroke in all their duties: 2 Cor. v. 11, 'Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' That was one reason which did engage him to faithfulness in preaching the word; compare it with ver. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

[3.] Natural conscience doth not do duties out of gratitude or thankfulness, but the great gospel-principle is gratitude. If there were no law to bind a regenerate man, yet he would not be ungrateful to God; but nature is rather prone to a sin-offering than a thank-offering. When our consciences are troubled, that we may lick ourselves whole again, then carnal men would perform duties, but not out of thankfulness to God. Under the law, when they came with their burnt-offerings, they were to offer to God a thank-offering, Lev. vi. 12. God will have thankfulness attend all our obedience; but nature only performs duties when we are troubled.

[4.] Natural conscience convinceth us of the duty, but not of the goodness of the duty; it shows us the need, but not the worth of worship; therefore there is a rising of heart, and a great deal of prejudice against that we perform. It makes a man to do duties, because he dares not do otherwise. Still the service of God is a burden and a weariness: they look upon God as an austere and hard master, Mat. xxv. 24. They think God is too strict, too exact, and deals with them upon justice; but where love and grace is the principle, there 'the commandments are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3; but we act with a great deal of delight and complacency in them.

[5.] Natural conscience works but at times, when convictions are strongest; it makes us mind duty in a sick qualm. When terror flashes in the face of a natural man, then he will apply himself to God. Usually a natural conscience doth use duties just as we take strong waters, not for a constant drink,—then they would mar the stomach, —but only to help us at a pang; so when we are in trouble, then nature chiefly puts us upon duty, then we are most enlarged and quickened: Hos. v. 15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early;' when distress is laid upon them: Jer. ii. 27, 'In the time of their trouble they will cry, Lord! save us.' All the duties of natural men are forced out of them, like water out of a still, by a sense of wrath; they come not so freely as from a sense of love.

Use 2. If it be so, that carnal men may join with the people of God in duties of worship, here is direction: in all your duties put your hearts to this question, Wherein do I excel a hypocrite? So far a natural man may go. As Christ said, Mat. v. 47, 'Do not even the publicans the same?' When thou art praying and hearing, and thy heart doth not go out with such delight and complacency to God, say, May not a carnal man do this? A christian should do duties in a distinguishing manner, that there should be a sensible difference between them and others.

Ques. But you will say, wherein lies the essential difference between the performances of carnal men and the children of God? This must be the work of the next doctrine.

SERMON XIV.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh—HEB. xi. 4.

Doct. 2. That there is a sensible difference between the godly and the wicked in their several duties and performances.

1. Why it is so?
2. What is the difference?

First, Why the children of God act in a different manner than the wicked?

Ans. They have another nature, and other assistance.

1. They have another nature than wicked men. Water can rise no higher than its fountain; acts are according to their causes; nature can but produce a natural act. The children of God have the spirit of grace bestowed upon them: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication.' First of grace, then of supplication; therefore their addresses come out of a principle of grace. A new work requires a new nature. As Christ spake in the matter of fasting: Mat. ix. 12, 'New wine must not be put into old bottles;' new wine and old bottles will never suit. Duties well done will make natural men either weary of their natural estate, or their natural estate will make them quite weary of their duty.

2. They have other assistance. The children of God have a mighty Spirit to help them: Jude 20, 'Praying in the Holy Ghost.' They pray not merely by the strength of parts, but by the Spirit. Natural men have only the rigour of natural parts, and some general assistance, whereby their gifts are heightened for the use of the church and good of the body, but they have not the special operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore, let them do what they can, they can never get up their worship to that height and latitude unto which godly men are raised. Look as in Elijah's time, 1 Kings xviii. 38, there was a contest between him and Baal's priests, the fire came down and devoured Elijah's

sacrifice. But Baal's priests might fetch blood from themselves, but not fire from heaven; so carnal men may force nature, beat themselves, cut their flesh, but their sacrifice will not burn; there is no holy flame by which their hearts are heightened and carried out as christians; they act in their own strength, and to their own ends, therefore there must need be a difference.

Secondly, Wherin lies the difference between the worship of the godly and the worship of carnal men that live in the church? I answer, In three things mainly—in the principle, in the manner, and in the end.

1. In the principle. Natural men do nothing out of the constraints of love, but out of the enforcement of conscience; duty is not their delight, but burden. Cain's sacrifice was tendered rather like a fine, than an offering; so are all their services. There are several sorts of principles of worship: some are altogether false and rotten, some tolerable, some good, and some are excellent.

[1.] Some are altogether false and rotten; as custom, and the statutes of men. Thus it is with wicked men, there is more of conformity than devotion; their worship is not so much an act of religion as of man observance. Men do as they learn of their fathers, or as authority commands, or as others expect from them.

[2.] Some principles are more tolerable; as enforcement of conscience, fear of eternal torment, natural desire of welfare and salvation. Men must pray, and keep up some worship, else they are afraid they shall be damned. Alas! this is but a natural act of self-love. Our salvation is never regularly desired but with subordination to God's glory. Or else they do it out of hope of temporal mercies. Men pray that God may bless them in their calling; constant observation of worship brings in a blessing, therefore they pray out of such a low end: Hosea vii. 14, 'They howl upon their beds,' saith the prophet, 'for corn, wine, and oil.' This is but a brutish cry: beasts will howl for things they stand in need of; so men may pray for outward conveniences without any grace. Consider, God's worship must not have an end beneath itself. We act preposterously, and not according to the laws of reason, when the means are more noble than the end, and worship is prostituted to such a base end as merely to serve our outward conveniences; when self is the end of prayer, it is not worship, but self-seeking. All gracious actions are to have a reference and ordination to God, therefore the spiritual life is called 'a living to God,' Gal. ii. 10; much more acts of worship, which are more raised operations of the spiritual life; there the addresses are more directly to God, and therefore must not be prostituted to a common use.

[3.] There are some good and sound principles, though in the lower form of good things; that is, when duties are done out of an enlightened conscience, and with respect to the command, and the general rewards and compensations of religion. It is true, acts thus done, upon these principles, are rightly done, because they are done in faith and obedience, which is that which constitutes and makes up the essence of a religious act; and usually these are the first dispositions of the soul after grace is first received. Therefore the apostle saith, 'He that cometh'—*προσερχόμενος*, or is coming on—to God, his main work is to 'believe

that God is, and that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,' Heb. xi. 6. He is to act his faith upon the reward God hath promised, and obedience upon the duty he hath required.

[4.] There are more excellent and raised principles of worship; and that is when duties are done out of a grateful remembrance of God's mercy to us in Christ, to testify our thankfulness to God: Luke i. 74, 'That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear;' or else when they are done out of a pure love to God, because we delight in his presence. Job xxvii. 10 makes that the note of a hypocrite, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?' A vile carnal man, natural conscience will make him call upon God in his straits; but doth he this out of delight? or else from the excellency and sweetness of the work of obedience? as, Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy law is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it,' when a man can love pure and holy duties because they are pure and holy, and for that very reason. Though there were no heaven nor hell, yet a child of God finds such a privilege in worship, and such a sweetness in communion with God, that he cannot omit it. What delight can be more sweet and ravishing to their souls than communion with God? God usually carrieth men on from one sort of principles to another: first from those that are sinful to those that are tolerable; then to those that are good; then to those that are rare and excellent. First he brings them on from custom to conscience; then from conscience to obedience; then from obedience to delight, to see the beauty of his ordinances and sweetness of his ways.

2. There is a difference in the manner how these duties are to be performed; this is to be regarded as well as the matter. A man may sin in doing good, but he can never sin in doing well. A man may sin though the matter be lawful, for the manner is all: Luke viii. 18, 'Take heed how you hear,' saith Christ; not only *that* you hear, but *how* you hear. A man must not only make conscience of the very act of worship, but of the manner how he performs it. There are several differences between the children of God and others in the manner of worship; it must be done humbly, reverently, affectionately.

[1.] It must be done humbly. It is not worship without it; they have a deep sense of their own vileness. In scripture the saints of the Most High in all their addresses to God, have always low thoughts of themselves; as the centurion: Mat. viii. 8, 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof;' and the great example of faith, Abraham—'O Lord, I am but dust and ashes,' Gen. xviii. 27. When we come to converse with God, it will put us in remembrance of our distance. Rev. v. 8, 'The elders fell down before the Lamb.' There will be a comparing of ourselves with God. Alas! what is our drop to his ocean? What is a candle before the sun? The children of God shrink into nothing, whether you respect the benefit they receive, or the glory of God's presence in worship. Gen. xvii. 3, when God came to tender his covenant to Abraham, 'he fell upon his face,' in humble adoration of God, because of the richness of his bounty. So when you consider the glory and majesty of God, you must humbly adore in the presence of God.

[2.] You must come with reverence: Eccles. v. 1, ‘Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God.’ When you go to worship, consider what you are about to do. We had need to awaken our drowsy and careless spirits, that we may have fresh and awful thoughts of God in worship. Exod. iii. 5, ‘Put off thy shoes from thy feet;’ lay aside the commonness of your spirit, and the ordinary frame of your heart. God complains of some that were careless, and brought the sick and the lame! Mal. i. 14, ‘Cursed be the deceiver, that hath a male in his flock, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great king, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ Wicked men’s approaches are rude and unhallowed, because they do not consider what a great king God is; therefore they will bring less to their great king than to an ordinary governor. We are more slight in our addresses to God than to an ordinary king. Wicked men, that are given up to vain superstition, may seem to be reverent in their gestures, and have more of the garb of religion; but the main thing they have not,—fresh and awful thoughts of God; they do not come as into the presence of a great king.

[3.] It must be with affection; God must be served with the heart. There are two things notable in the affections,—vehemency and complacency.

[1.] Vehemency: Ps. lxiii. 8, ‘My soul follows hard after thee.’ A man should not faint when he comes to seek God; our motion should not be weak, but an earnest travail of the spirit to find God. Wicked men’s prayers are but paper-and-ink devotions; they do not lay out their hearts and affections before God. At best, their prayers are but a little spiritless talk and prattle, and tongue-babbling. The Lord looks after the reaching forth of the soul: James v. 16, ‘The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;’ δέησις ἐνεργουμένη—we translate it ‘effectual fervent;’ the word signifies prayer possessed of the Spirit. Prayer must be full of life and vigour. And ver. 17, it is said, ‘Elijah prayed earnestly.’ In the original it is, προσευχῇ προσηνύξατο, he prayed in prayer. It was not only tongue, but heart prayer; the spirit prayed while the mouth was praying. The Spirit assists in groans rather than words, those inward reachings forth of the soul after God.

(2.) Your duties must be managed with complacency and delight: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, ‘One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.’ The Lord will have the exercise of your joy. Now, that a man may delight in the worship of God, there seems to be two things necessary: spiritual esteem, that we may look upon it as a privilege that there is more delight in it than in the house of mirth; and a child-like confidence, that we may have some hopes towards God, otherwise duty will be a sad burden. Carnal affections beget weariness; and carnal doubts beget fear and trouble. We have to do with God the fountain of blessing, and with our God. None complain of duties so much as they that have least cause. Men that are most perfunctory in God’s service find it most irksome; as those that brought the sick and the lame came puffing and blowing to the temple as if they were tired, and cried, ‘What a weariness is it!’ Mal. i. 13. Partly because they have no spiritual esteem, and do not know how to value communion with God, what it is for a creature to have such near approach to him. Partly because they have no child-like confidence. Worship

returns their fears upon them, and puts them to a new penance, and brings their sorrow to their remembrance ; therefore they cannot act with any complacency. Isa. lviii. 13, the prophet bids us ‘call the sabbath a delight.’ When we rest in the bosom of God all day, there are actual emanations of grace and comfort.

3. There is a difference in regard of the end. Now there is a general and a particular end of worship.

[1.] A general end, and that is twofold ; to glorify God and to enjoy God ; the one is the work of duty, and the other is the reward of duty. (1.) The great end of duty is to glorify God. Grace heightens all our natural actions to a supernatural intention : 1 Cor. x. 31, ‘Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ Eating and drinking ; therefore especially must duties of worship, and those solemn operations of the new nature. Duties of worship and exercises of grace must be to the glory of God. God is said ‘to inhabit the praises of Israel,’ Ps. xxii. 3 ; meaning the temple, the place of worship where God was chiefly honoured and praised. Duties of worship are chiefly for the honour of God. Now carnal men have other ends ; either they use duty in design as hypocrites ; or with a natural end, as to satisfy natural conscience. With a design, which is hypocrisy. Religion is one of the best commodities in his way of trade and commerce ; therefore carnal men make ordinances to lacquey upon their private ends ; they pray and preach for esteem and gain to set off themselves ; they use the holy things of God for some base ends of their own : 2 Cor. ii. 7, ‘We are not of those that corrupt the word of God, καπηλεύοντες.’ This is the true Simony, to huck out the gospel, and sell our holy things. Hypocrites look upon religion as a device fitted for their turns—*Quandas nobis comparavit divitias*, or else carnal men use worship for a natural end, which is the worship of a natural conscience, and is prostituted to self-respect. A natural conscience is hearty and real in its worship, but not spiritual, because it merely aims at self, some temporal commodity, or eternal salvation, as a mere hire. O Christians ! look to your ends. Many look that the matter be good, that they can raise themselves into any quickness and smartness of affection ; but the end is all : Col. iii. 23, ‘Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.’ Let God’s glory be at the end. (2.) The second end of worship is to enjoy God. Many mind duties as a task, and as the mere homage of the creature, and look not upon it as a means of communion, by which God will let out himself to us. This must be your aim, to use duty to further your joy in the Lord. Duty is expressed by ‘drawing nigh to God,’ Heb. x. 22. You must renew in every exercise your access to God by him. Now carnal men are content with the duty wrought, though there be no intercourse between God and their souls. Therefore a godly man looks at this, what of God he hath found ; how he hath come to Christ as to a living stone. You must not be content with the duty instead of God.

[2.] There is a particular aim, and that is always suited to the particular part of worship, and that is a right intention. It is a sign you do not come customarily when you come to seek that for which God hath instituted that special worship. As in the word, the end of that

is to submit ourselves to Christ as our teacher or to promote our life or the liveliness of our souls ; therefore when you come to be taught by Christ, you come aright to hear the word. And in prayer the particular end is that we may make use of Jesus Christ as our advocate to God the Father, and may solemnly act our graces in opening our case to God. So in the sacrament, when you come to Christ as the master of the feast, to refresh your souls with the renewed sense of his bounty ; as Christ said to those that went to hear John, Mat. xi. 8, ‘ What went you out into the wilderness to see ? ’ so, for what reason did you put yourselves upon such worship ? Well then, see that you offer a sacrifice more excellent than carnal men ; look to your principle, manner, and end.

Use. To press you to see that you offer a sacrifice more excellent than common men. Here I shall speak to three cases, concerning the principle, the manner, and the end of duty.

1. For the principle, Whether or no it be not a mere natural act to eye the reward, and in what manner it is lawful ?

2. For the manner, Whether the children of God may not be surprised sometimes with perfunctory deadness, and wicked men may not by some high impulses be raised to some extraordinary quickness and zeal in duties of worship ?

3. For the end, Whether the children of God may not reflect sometimes upon a carnal end in the duties of worship, and how far this is a note of insincerity ?

Case 1. For the principle, Whether or no it be not a mere natural act to perform duty with an eye to punishments and rewards ? The reason of the inquiry is because I pressed before, that duties, for the principle of them, should be acts of faith, love, and obedience, and not merely done out of the enforcement of conscience ; and many press men to acts of religion upon conceits abstracted from all respects to rewards or punishments.

I shall answer this case— (1.) By laying down several spiritual observations ; (2.) By stating the question.

The spiritual observations are these—

1. To act in holy duties with respect to terrors and punishments is a far lower principle than to act with an eye to the recompence of reward. Why ? because it comes nearer to the rack and enforcement of natural conscience. Hope is a better principle than fear. Bare reason will show that fallen man is liable to judgment, and natural credulity doth more easily suit with the threatenings than the promise ; for guilt sitting heavy upon the conscience makes the soul to be more presagious of that which is evil than of that which is good ; and the punishment of sin is far more credible than the reward of grace. The heathens that had committed sin knew themselves to be worthy of death ; so the apostle, Rom. i. 32. And we see by common experience those doctrines that concern the conviction of sin, make a greater impression upon the soul than gospel promises.

2. I observe, that the consideration of threatenings and punishments are more proper for the avoiding of sin than for the practising of duty ; for as nature doth more hearken to threatenings, so nature is more sensible of sins of commission than of omission. Duty is an act of life, and tendeth to life ; and therefore the proper respect that draws on the

soul to duty is the reward, and the proper dissuasive from sin is the threatening and punishment: Rom. viii. 13, ‘If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.’ When the apostle would dissuade them from sin, he lays death before them; when he would draw them to the practice of holiness, then he propounds encouragements of life and peace.

3. That fear which is culpable is rather an impression than a voluntary act of the creature. It is not a fear begotten by the exercise of our faith or thoughts upon the threatening of the word; but a slavish terror is enforced upon the soul by the spirit of bondage and the evidence of a guilty conscience. When the children of God do make use of terrors, they act their own thoughts upon them; as Paul: 2 Cor. v. 11, ‘Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.’ The apostle in his own thoughts graciously considered the severity of the process Jesus Christ would use at the day of judgment. But now the thoughts of the curse in wicked men are but involuntary impressions; they care not for duty, and they would not willingly fear the threatening. *Non peccare metuunt, sed ardere,* saith Austin, they are not afraid to sin and offend God, but they are afraid to be damned. There is impressed upon them, against their will, a fear of damnation, so that they act out of a mere constraint of terror; when they dare not do otherwise, then ‘they come with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord,’ Hos. v. 6. That they do not willingly fear the threatening is plain, because they are so apt to take all advantages to enlarge themselves, and to get free of this awe; for their desire is not so much to please God as to dissolve the bonds of conscience, and allay their own private fears.

4. When natural men look after the rewards and recompenses of religion, they have wrong notions and apprehensions both of heaven and duty: of heaven as the end, and of duty as the means. (1.) Of heaven; they have nothing but loose, sudden, indistinct desires of happiness. Nature poiseth us to an eternal good, for our own ease and pleasure; therefore natural men may have loose desires of happiness: Num. xxiii. 10, ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,’ and John vi. 34, ‘Lord, evermore give us of this bread.’ They look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure, and therefore conceive some loose sudden wishes. There needs some grace to desire that which is truly the heaven of christians, which is to enjoy God in an eternal and gracious communion; this will require some exercise of faith, and some spiritual esteem. (2.) They have wrong thoughts of duty; they look upon it as a work by which they must earn the wages of heaven. A natural spirit can never be evangelical. Therefore the sure notes of undue reflections upon the recompenses and punishments which God hath propounded are these two—merit and slavish fear. When natural men look upon terror, the spirit is altogether servile, and vexed with such scruples as do not become the liberty of the gospel, or haunted with such thoughts as do not become the tenour of the gospel. Saith Christ, Luke xvii. 10, ‘When ye have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants.’ Though we look to the reward, yet we should not look for it as a salary from a master, but as a gift from a father. It is mercenary to act for hire and wages, and establish merit in our private thoughts.

(5.) The acts of the creature are never gracious but when they are ultimately terminated on God. When natural men act in the duties of religion, self is always both in the beginning, and end, and middle of the work ; they act from self-love, in self-strength, and with self-respects. But in a godly man all his acts terminate on God ; he makes God the fountain, the object, and the end of all his duties, and so his acts come to be gracious. But now for the applying of promises : there is a great deal of difference between seeking self in God and seeking self in the creature. A hypocrite always looks to self, but it is in the world ; he looks more to credit or profit than to heaven or hell. Self-love, which is an innocent disposition in nature, is improved by grace, for when we seek our welfare in God, that is right ; for this is one of the ends of religion—to enjoy God, as well as to glorify God.

(6.) The children of God are sometimes stirred and cheerfully drawn out in duties of religion, by the lower rewards and conveniences of the present life, and that without sin. Obedience is their principle, but the concurrence of outward encouragements may carry them on with more facility and alacrity ; as, for instance, a diligent servant goes about his master's business readily, but with more gladness when he meets with fair weather and good speed. So we must primarily look at the will of our master, and discharge our work, whatever our entertainment be ; but if God give us the advantage of profit and credit, and a good name, we must be more cheerful in his service. A wicked man looks altogether to those outward respects ; he is forward when his own interest and God's are twisted together ; he may be then carried out with zealous earnestness, but the unsoundness of his heart is herein seen, in that he prefers self before God. When self is severed from the commandments of God, he lets them alone ; but the children of God have learned to pass 'through honour and dishonour,' 2 Cor. vi. 8 ; they still keep on in the way of duty, whatever entertainment they find in the world. Outward conveniences are very useful to encourage us in our way, and to make our duties more dear and sweet to us. Look, as ciphers added to figures increase the sum, so these things that are as ciphers in comparison of graces, yet if they are found in the way of obedience, they increase the sum : Eccles. xi. 7, 'Wisdom is good with an inheritance.' It is good without, but then there are more obligations. The main principle is obedience, and this is but their accidental encouragement.

Quest. These observations premised, I come to state the question, How far it may be excused from a mere act of self-love for a christian to reflect upon the rewards and punishments of religion ? Here I shall show—

1. You may make use of them.
2. In what manner.

[1.] You may make use of them. There may be a religious use of punishments and rewards in the matter of duty by natural reason. Punishments are the objects of fear, and rewards the objects of desire and hope, and the faculties may be exercised about their proper object without sin. But there is an exercise, not only of nature, but of grace. It was an argument of Paul's faith when he reflected upon the day of judgment, 2 Cor. v.11, 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we

persuade men.' It was an argument of Moses's faith 'to have an eye to the recompence of reward,' Heb. xi. 26. It is some glory to God when we can believe his word, when we trust in him as one wise to observe, and able and willing to recompence, whatever we do for him. Besides, as there is an act of faith in it, so there is an act of spiritual esteem: it is a sign there is grace, when we can prefer the recompenses of God before present advantages and the allurements of men. And it is an act of spiritual fear to value the threatenings of God before the terrors of men. And it is an act of faith to expect and wait for the accomplishment of these things. It is a prime article to believe 'that God is a rewarder,' Heb. i. 6; and it needs a spiritual eye to see the riches of our high-calling; therefore the apostle desires that God would open their eyes, that 'ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 17; that they might be acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel and the rewards of obedience, to keep them still in sight, that upon the encouragement of them we may discharge our duty.

[2.] How, and in what manner you may use them right; for rewards are but encouragements of obedience, not the formal reasons of it. Gratitude, love of God and his honour, these must be the chief incentives, and have the preferment above all self-respect in our obedience. The formal reason of every duty must be obedience to God; but the encouragements are the promises and recompenses.

(1.) You may use them to encourage and quicken a backward heart. We look upon duty through carnal prejudices, and count it a sore exactation, and so draw back; in such a case we may safely use God's arguments as encouragements. God propoundeth them to us in the word, and pleads with us upon this advantage, and seeks to whip us into obedience by the spur of threatenings and hopes. God pleads with his people, Jer. ii. 31, 'Have I been a land of darkness to you? have I been a wilderness?' Is there no blessing grows there? no sun-shine? All the argumentative part of the word is taken from the recompenses and threatenings. Surely it is not good to be wise above the scriptures; we may use that which the scripture useth. Thus the apostle shows he presseth onward upon this advantage: Phil. iii. 14, 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ; the glorious recompenses and high prizes God had set before him at the end of the journey, this made him make progress in the way of religion.

(2.) In the spiritual conflict, to baffle and defeat a temptation. So you may use these rewards and punishments; for herein you do but declare the high esteem you have of your hopes, more than the bait that is presented in the temptation. Let us cast our hopes in another scale: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things which are not seen,' &c. When things seen come to stand in competition with our high hopes, it is not only lawful but necessary to reflect upon the recompenses. We expect great things from God; he hath promised things unseen. So the apostle, when likely to be discouraged by the inconveniences of this life: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Moses counterbalanceth

'the pleasures of Egypt, with the recompence of reward,' Heb. xi. 2-6 ; and Jesus Christ counterbalanceth the shame of the cross with the glory of his exaltation : Heb. xii. 2, 'Who, for the glory that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.' What is carnal ease to heavenly pleasure ? the fulfilling of a carnal desire to the filling up of the soul with God ? This is nothing but a holy design to outweigh a temptation by putting the glory of our hopes in the other scale ; by opposing the joys of heaven to the pleasures of sin ; and the sweetness of eternal communion with God to the gratifications of the flesh.

(3) To renew the solemn remembrance of your hopes with thankfulness that your heart may the more admire the riches of free grace. By this means the great gospel principle will be the better strengthened, which is gratitude and thankfulness. Now we may be the more thankful, and more drawn out in the admiration of grace. Oh, how should we esteem the Lord's service ! He might enforce duty upon us, but he is pleased to quicken us by the reward. Oh, that he should reward such worthless services, and honour our obedience with such recompenses and privileges ! This is a right reflection when our thoughts are carried out to the reward, as rather admiring God's bounty than respecting our own benefit. Gratitude is by this means strengthened, and hath the greater force upon the soul. Gratitude doth not only look to mercies in hand, but also look for mercies in hope. The bird of paradise can sing in winter ; faith can give thanks for our hopes before enjoyment. You may say, as Ps. xiii. 19, 'Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ! which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.' There is not only goodness laid out, and thankfulness for that, but for goodness laid up in hope, those excellences and glorious rewards God hath provided for us ; this should put us upon admiring grace.

SERMON XV.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh—HEB. xi. 4.

Case. 2. The second case respects the manner of duties : they must be done with vehemency and complacency. Now here arise two cases :—

1. Whether the children of God may not be surprised sometimes with perfunctory deadness ? Can their souls go out to God always with holy fervour and holy ardencies ?

2. Whether wicked men may not by high impulses be raised into extraordinary quickness in duties of worship ? and whence this comes ?

First, Whether the children of God may not be surprised sometimes with perfunctory deadness ? &c. I answer—

1. It may be so indeed. Sometimes their affections are like the

faint hands of Moses, that flag and hang down : Gal. v. 17, ‘The flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that they cannot do the things they would.’ So Paul complains, Rom. vii. 18, ‘How to perform that which is good, I find not;’ he could not *κατεργάζειν*, go through with his work; like a sick man, that cannot do what he would.

2. Though there may such deadness fall upon them, yet still there is a willing bent of the heart towards God. Graces that live may not always be lively: there is a living faith and a lively faith; and there may be deadness in the children of God, though there be not an utter death. Look, as our saviour found in his own experience when he was to suffer for us, just so it is with us when we come to perform duty. In Christ the manhood sank by a just aversion at the greatness of his sufferings; therefore, Mat. xxvi. 41, ‘The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak;’ the flesh—that is, the manhood—is not able to bear such a brunt, though the spirit had freely given it up. So the inward man goes out to God freely, though there be the outward reluctance of the carnal man: Rom. vii. 22, ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man.’ Though there were strugglings, yet the bent of his heart was toward God. This will appear, because the children of God in such indispositions are not idle, but seek; they are seriously displeased with the distempers and uncomfortableness of their souls, as appears by their strugglings with God and striving with themselves. By their strugglings with God: Ps. cxix. 28, ‘Strengthen thou me according to thy word;’ and ver. 32, ‘I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge mine heart.’ When they have felt their straits and deadness, they would fain be set free; and so, by their striving with themselves, weariness and deadness may seize upon the heart in prayer, but then a christian bestirs himself. Always you shall find when the children of God are calling upon God they are calling upon themselves; there are resuscitations and awakenings of their drowsy souls. Therefore it is said, Isa. lxiv. 7, ‘There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.’ There must not only be a calling upon God, but a stirring up ourselves: Ps. lvii. 8, saith David, ‘Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.’ It is not a sign of no grace to be troubled with indispositions; but it is a sign of no grace to rest in them.

Secondly, May not wicked men by high impulses be raised into extraordinary quickness in duties of worship? and whence comes this?

Ans. This may be, and there are many causes of it in a hypocrite. It may come from the constraints of carnal ends: delight may carry us on freely in the outward part of worship; joy is the strength of the soul. We are more ready in that which we delight in. In superstitions men it comes sometimes from fanatic delusions and transports. False experience may whet the wit, though the heart be not made the more humble or holy. And sometimes, in carnal men in distress, it may come from unsound fervour of carnal affections, and they may seek their earthly comforts with a great deal of earnestness. The motions of lust are always violent and rapid; and a carnal spring may send forth a high tide of affection. You know it is said, Hos. vii. 14, ‘They howl upon their beds for their corn, wine, and oil;’ their

prayers may be sharpened to howling when they are pleading for the concernments of the belly. But most usually it doth arise from the quickness and vivacity of nature. In youth, where there hath not been a great waste of spirits, usually there is a kind of natural vehemency. And some men we see are of temper fierce and earnest; and they may seem very affectionate and loud in language, vehement in expression, and all this out of the eagerness of the bodily spirits, and mere heat and contention of nature; but all this while they have no spiritual affections. As I have read of Gracceus, that was so earnest in speech—that one was wont to come to him and sound a retreat to his spirit, *ut revocaret eum a nimia contentione dicendi*—that he might call him from too great a contention of speech. It is with many men now as with a bell, which is carried by its own sway. Now it is a dangerous folly to mistake everything for grace. I confess there is a great deal of use of this vivacity of nature, it serves to deliver and set off vehement affections; but lungs and sides must not be mistaken for grace, and the agitations of the bodily spirits for the impressions of the Holy Ghost. Men may work themselves into a great heat and vehemency by the mere stirring of their bodily humours; and it is easy for men of an affectionate temper to put on a passion, though their hearts be not affected; as corrupt lawyers can plead on either side with a like earnestness. We cheat ourselves with common operations. Parts can furnish the tongue with matter, and an eager spirit can supply the room of christian affections. As a man by overmuch contention of speech may seem to be mightily transported and raised in declaiming against sin, when in the meantime he hath no true indignation against it, and so is but ‘like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,’ 1 Cor. xiii. 1. There are men that cannot contain themselves in prayer when they are but a little heated and agitated, and yet have no raisedness of affection, no earnest pursuits and reachings-forth after God in their souls; it is the travail of the body only, and not the travail of the soul. David supposeith that there may be crying to God with the tongue when the heart regards iniquity; Ps. lxvi. 18, ‘If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.’ There may be a forcing of nature into expressions when no serious indignation is kindled in the heart against sin, and an aversion of heart to holiness. St Austin made zealous prayers that God would mortify his lusts; but his heart would always object, *Noli modo, &c.*—Lord, do not hear me just now; I am afraid lest God should hear me. At least their hearts do not pray in prayer, notwithstanding this outward vehemency of their tongue.

Ques. But you will say, How shall we discern this false vehemency from that which is true, and that which is holy fervour and going out of the spirit towards God? It may be tried by the irreverence of your souls in prayer, and carelessness of your souls after prayer.

1. By the irreverence of soul in prayer. When there is not a due consideration of the nature and presence of God, certainly it is a natural transportation; when men are drawn out to a great heat of affection yet no reverence of God. In a distempered heat in prayer or preaching men are apt to forget themselves; they do not consider to whom or before whom they speak, therefore they are ‘rash to utter anything with their mouth,’ Eccles. v. 1, 2. Men may be hasty to utter words,

though there be no due affection and reverence in the spirit. A true earnestness of spirit makes us remember God the more, because we are enjoying communion with God ; but a false earnestness is counted but babbling. Mat. vi. 7, our Saviour speaks of those ‘that thought to be heard for their much speaking.’ Carnal worshippers place much in this, in their vehement pronouncing ; as Baal’s priests, Elijah bids them ‘cry aloud,’ 1 Kings xviii. 27 ; so they place much in the mere extension of their voice, and crying aloud.

2. It may be discerned by the carelessness of their souls after prayer ; when men are vehement in worship, and never look after the effects of worship. Usually men throw away their prayers, as children shoot away their arrows, and never look after them. True vehemency will stir up a like earnestness in the expectations and endeavours of the soul : Ps. lxxxv. 8, ‘I will hear what God the Lord will speak.’ There will be hearkening after the success of such earnest prayers that have been poured out with height of affection. Now to pray against sin and not strive against it, and not to look after the return of it, shows a false heart, and that it was but a feigned and personated heat, like acting of a part upon a stage, till the task of prayer was over. Desire is a vigorous bent of the soul ; it is an active affection, that will put men upon endeavours ; and you will be stirring, waiting, seeing how your prayers are accomplished ; otherwise it is but a passion put on for a time. When a man prays vehemently for grace, and then goes out and sins against his prayers, how can those prayers be right ? It is but an empty declamation, especially if men confute their own prayers with their lives ; like those that sacrificed to Esculapius, and prayed for health, but kept on their riotous feasts.

Case 3. The third case is concerning the end of duties, Whether or no the children of God may not reflect sometimes upon a carnal end in duties of worship ? And how far is it a note of insincerity ?

I answer in several propositions—

1. The best trial of a christian is in his duties of worship. If at any time, there he may discern the effects and operations of the new nature, and the actings of grace in his own soul ; for there sins are most checked, there he comes more solemnly to exercise his grace, there his addresses are immediately to God. It argues much of unmortifiedness to have carnal reflections when we are conversing with God. It is God’s complaint, Jer. xxiii. 11, ‘Both the prophet and priest are profane ; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.’ To conceive those fleshly motions in God’s house is a matter of high aggravation ; for here we come to set up grace in authority most solemnly, and act it in the highest way of operation towards God.

2. As a christian is tried in his duties, so our duties are tried by our designs and aims. It is not the excellency of the outward address, it is not the vehemency of the inward affection, but the integrity of the end and aim towards God. Practice may be overruled by custom ; excellency of speech may be drawn forth upon carnal impulsions ; affections may be made violent by lust : but the genuine birth of the spirit is the end and aim we propose to ourselves. And therefore a child of God can appear to God’s omniscience for his love to him. Human infirmities may make us fail in all other parts of duty, but

grace will set the end right, which is usually proportioned to the frame of the heart. As the heart is, so is the end. This is the great differencing circumstance: Prov. xvi. 2, ‘The Lord weighs the spirits, *quo animo*; with what end and aim an action is done. Christ saith, ‘The light of the body is the eye,’ Mat. vi. 22. A single aim and intent towards God is the best discovery of our sincerity in religious duties.

3. Yet notwithstanding the carnal part will be interposing and vexing the spirit with carnal aims, as the daughters of Heth vexed Rebecca, Gen. xxvii. 46. In the best duties we ever perform we plough with an ox and an ass. When we come to do good, evil will be present: Rom. vii. 21, ‘I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.’ And as evil, so also evil aims; I know no difference. Corruption may cast in vain-glorious glances, or covetous thoughts and reflections upon external advantages, as well as blasphemies and sins of another nature.

4. Though the carnal nature may vex the new nature with those carnal reflections, yet there is a sensible difference still between them and others, because grace hath the strongest influence. And though there be carnal reflections, yet there are not carnal principles: these are but collateral and supervenient glances, not the main motives and chief reasons of their worship, which are obedience and love to God. It is hypocrisy to act in design, but this they do not; though carnal aims run in their minds too much, yet when they do, they are resisted there. As when Abraham had divided the sacrifices, ‘the fowls came down; but Abraham drove them away,’ Gen. xv. 11; so when we come to pour out our spirits in duties of religion, the fowls may come, carnal thoughts may rush into our minds; but they do not rest there, the soul drives them away. The constant bent and aim of the spirit is to serve God and enjoy communion with God, though these carnal reflections may encumber their souls. Therefore a christian is to try himself by the mainspring of his soul—what is the weight, the poise within to worship; for a christian hath a double principle, flesh and spirit, but not a double heart; a hypocrite hath a double heart; he doth but put on a pretence of worship, and useth it in design. It is true, we cannot come into the presence of God without sin, yet a child of God will come without guile. He cannot bring a pure heart absolutely clean, but he brings a true heart, Heb. x. 22; the desire of his soul is towards God; and the chief reason that puts him upon worship is to glorify and enjoy God.

Doct. 3. This sensible difference between the duties of the godly and the wicked is occasioned by the influence and efficacy of faith.

Here I shall state—(1.) What this faith of Abel was; (2.) I shall handle the general case.

First, What this faith of Abel was.

1. There was a faith of his being accepted with God when his service was suited to the institution. He believed that God would by some visible testimony manifest his acceptation. Such a promise was intimated to them, as appears by God’s expositulation with Cain: Gen. iv. 7, ‘If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?’ As if God should have said, Did I promise to accept any other service but what was conformed to my appointments? There was a belief of God’s essence and attributes, and a consequent love to him, willing to give God the best.

2. It was a faith in the general rewards and recompenses of religion. Abel looked to the good things to come, and so his hopes had an influence upon his practice; Cain's heart was altogether chained to earthly things, therefore he looks upon that as lost which was spent in sacrifice. This may also be probably collected out of Gen. iv. 8, 'And Cain talked with (or said to) Abel his brother.' Here is mention of some speech of Cain to Abel, but it is not expressly set down what the discourse was. Indeed in the Hebrew text there is a pause extraordinary, implying some further matter to be added. The Septuagint adds, 'And he said to Abel, Let us go out together into the field.' The Targum of Jerusalem reads it thus, 'And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go out into the field. And it came to pass when they were in the field, Cain said to his brother, There is no judge, no judgment, no other world, no reward for the just, no vengeance for the wicked; neither did God make the world in mercy, nor in mercy was thy sacrifice accepted.' All which when Abel had denied, in the height of that discourse, Cain rose up and killed him. From whence we may collect that the faith that had an influence upon his sacrifice was faith in the general rewards and compensations of religion.

3. It was a faith in the Messiah to come. The first-born of God was typed out in those first-fruits, and therefore is Christ called 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8; that is, in those offerings and sacrifices. And this is the apostle's drift in this place; they had a promise, 'That the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head'; and in those darker times Abel had a faith in this promise, and this faith bettered his offerings. All the patriarchs obtained that renown they had in the churches of Christ by faith in the Messiah. Out of that expectation he brought a well-beseeming sacrifice to God. In these times of the gospel all is more clear and open, and therefore God requires more from us; the persuasions of faith are greater, therefore the operations of faith must be greater too.

Secondly, For the reasons of the point, Why faith makes this difference between worship and worship, that it makes the duties and worship of believers to be so different from that of carnal men?

1. I answer, because it discerneth by a clearer light and apprehension. Faith is the eye of the soul. A beast liveth by sense, a man by reason, and a christian by faith. By sense a beast discerneth what is convenient and inconvenient to their manner of life; reason guides ordinary men in their choice and course of affairs; but faith is the light of a christian in the whole business of this life, but chiefly in his worship. Now the discerning work of faith is conversant both about God as the object of worship, and about the work itself; in short, to represent the truth of God's being and the worth of God's service.

[1.] To represent to us the truth of God's being: faith 'seeth him that is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. Every natural man is an inward atheist, because he wants the light of faith; he cannot see God, therefore he does but serve God as he would serve an idol; all their worship is customary, and done in obedience and conformity to the common practice. As the scoffer said of the worship of God, *Eamus ad communem errorem* —Let us go to the common error and mistake. Certainly their hearts are not touched with the sense of God's being; and therefore the first and general act of faith in and about duties of worship is wanting.

which is to keep the heart aweful by a clear sight and apprehension of God: Heb. xi. 6, ‘He that cometh to God must believe that he is.’ The great work of faith, and that which is the foundation of all, is to help us to proper thoughts and conceptions of God—a thing which wicked men can never attain to; for though they are able to discourse of God’s attributes, though they have a naked model and idea of the truth of religion, yet in worship they know not how to raise their hearts into a due apprehension of God. But as the heathens abused their *γνῶστον Θεοῦ*, and their practical thoughts in worship were gross carnal imaginations, Rom. i. 22; so do these, they never have fresh and aweful thoughts of God. Now this troubles the children of God when faith is drowsy, and they are not able to form proper and becoming thoughts of God in their worship and invocation; so that this first thing is of great advantage and putteth a difference between worship and worship. Faith keeps God in the view of the soul.

[2.] Faith discerns the worth of his service. When we look upon duty with a carnal eye, the soul is prejudiced, and we consider it as a sour task and rigid exaction, and so the soul drives on very heavily. Now faith convinceth of the worth of divine service, and representeth more of privilege than of burden in it. In the eye of faith, service is an honour and duty a privilege: Ps. lxxiii. 28, ‘It is good for me to draw near God.’ Mark, it is not only meet or just, but good. Faith sees a great deal of excellency and sweetness and privilege in it: and so it makes reason and the sanctified judgment to issue forth a practical decree, ‘It is good,’ which sways and determines all the operations of the soul. The first inquiry of the creature is, What is lawful? then, What is possible? then, What is profitable? Do not leave these questions to the decision of human reason, then you will quickly be discouraged; but put the controversy into the hands of faith, and that will judge it is good, sweet, and easy: Ps. xix. 10, ‘Thy testimonies are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey and honey-comb.’ A carnal man may understand the nature and necessity of duty, but he is not convinced of the worth of it. Faith is an affective light; it determines all practical cases on religion’s side, and leaves a spiritual esteem upon the soul: Ps. lxxxiv. 1, ‘Oh! how amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord!’ Oh! when shall these be the workings of our spirits? Faith seeth that duty is a reward to itself, that here the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest work; and therefore if there were no other reward, if there were no heaven, they find such pleasure in the duty that it were allurement enough of itself; as a martyr, when he came to die, said he was sorry that being to receive so much wages, he had done so little work. This makes the soul bend all its strength and all its power in seeking of God. The children of God do duties in another manner, because they look upon God and duty with other eyes.

2. Faith receives a mighty aid and supply from the Spirit of God, Faith plants the soul into Christ, and so receives influence from him; it is the great band of union between us and Christ, and the hand whereby we receive all the supplies of Jesus Christ. Christ lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith. Until faith come, there can be no vital influence. Wicked men’s gifts may be elevated; God

may work as *author naturæ*, the author of nature, though not as *sons gratiæ*, the fountain of grace. Therefore it must needs make a difference. What is the vigour of parts to the efficacy of the spirit? Faith draws Christ into the duty, and his Spirit bears a part of the burden: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit' — συναντιλαμβάνεται — 'helpeth our infirmities.' We tug, and the Spirit helpeth also. This then is the work of faith, to receive the supplies of grace. An actual faith hath the promise of an actual assistance; and when God's power is glorified, then it is exercised: Ps. lxxxi. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Look, as little birds open their mouths, and then the great one feeds them; faith is nothing but an opening of the soul upon God, then Jesus Christ gives in a supply of grace.

3. As it receives a mighty aid, so it works by a forcible principle, and that is by love; for 'Faith works by love,' Gal. v. 6. We live by faith, and we work by love. Where faith is, there is love; and where love is, there is work. Affection follows persuasion, and operation follows affection. First there is a persuasion of the love of God, then thankful returns of affection to God, and they are manifested by holy operations for the glory of God. Faith filleth the soul with the apprehensions of God's love, and then maketh use of the sweetness of it, to urge the soul to duty. There is a twofold advantage we have in love: it will be active and self-denying. (1.) Active: it puts the soul upon work; it is a laborious grace, and the spring of all action; therefore labour and love are often joined together in scripture: Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love;' 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering your work of faith and labour of love.' Love will put us upon work for God. Jacob endured much toil for Rachel, because he loved her. Christ gateth Peter upon this point: John xxi. 15, 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me? feed my sheep.' The church of Ephesus, when 'she lost her first love,' she 'left her first-fruits,' Rev. ii. 4. If love be not faint and languid, the soul will be kept open and liberal for God. Love will carry a man through, and poiseth the soul to those holy duties which are tedious and irksome to flesh and blood. (2.) It acteth with self-denial and complacency against carnal ease and present advantage, though it be tedious, and put us upon inconveniences in the world. Inward duties are against carnal affections, outward duties are against carnal interests; yet love will carry them through with delight and complacency: 1 John v. 3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' It takes off the natural irksomeness which is in the heart. Love makes a great change in the heart. While the heart is naturally corrupt, sin is a delight, and the commandment is a burden; but when the love of God is let into the heart, corruption is counted the yoke, and duty is counted the delight and pleasure of the soul. The children of God, we hear them complaining, not of the law, but of their own corruption: Rom. vii. 14, 'The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.' Natural men are always quarrelling with their convictions, their conflict is against the light that shines in their mind; but spiritual men are always conflicting with their lusts; and their groans arise from another principle—not because the law requires duty, but because they cannot perform it, by reason of those relucations that

are in their evil natures. Love will carry them to duty that is against the hair and bent of nature. It went much against the heart of Hamor and Shechem to be circumcised, and that rite was odious among the gentiles; yet it is said, Gen. xxxiv. 19, ‘That the young man deferred not to do it, because he had a delight in Jacob’s daughter.’ So though duty be never so much against the bent of nature and the course of worldly advantages, yet duty will be sweet to them, for love will carry them through for the delight they have in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 14, ‘The love of Christ constraineth us.’ Though he draws trouble upon himself, yet love carries the soul away against all reluc-tations.

4. It discourses and pleads with the soul with strong reasons and enforcements. Faith is a notable orator to plead for God; it pleads partly from the mercies, and partly from the promises of God.

[1.] From the mercies of God, both special and common. (1.) God’s special love in Jesus Christ. The arguments of faith are dipped in Christ’s blood, therefore they have the greater strength and force in the soul: Gal. ii. 20, ‘I live by the faith of the Son of God;’ and the argument of faith is there intimated by the apostle, ‘who loved me, and gave himself for me.’ When the soul is backward, faith will say, He freely gave himself for me, shall I not do something for thee that hast left so much glory for me? That hast pardoned so many sins, conveyed so many blessed privileges, estates me in such large hopes, shall I think anything too dear for him? When Christ was to suffer upon the cross, he did not say, This is hard work, and it will cost me dear; I must endure contempt, bitter agonies, and foul ignominy, and be exercised with the wrath of God. No, but he said, ‘I come to do thy will, O God;’ Heb. x. 7; Father, I come to satisfy thy justice; sinners, I come to save your souls: Isa. liii. 11, ‘He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.’ That word implies both the cost and the gain; it would cost him much agony of spirit, and the gain is implied. He shall see that which he hath travailed for; he shall see a company of children he hath gained to himself. When Christ saw all this, he said, It is enough; so I may rescue these poor souls, I am contented with the temptations of the wilderness, the sorrows of the garden, the ignominy of the cross, the wrath of my Father, the suspension of the comforts of my godhead. Faith comes and represents this to the soul; then the believer cannot say nay: he is overcome, and brought with cheerfulness into God’s presence. There is no oratory like that of faith. (2.) Then it argues from common mercies. As Abel, God had blessed his increase, therefore at the year’s end he comes to return the fat and fairest to God. Faith reasons with the soul, Wilt thou not honour the God of thy mercies? Thou livest in him, and movest in him, and hast thy being from him; what wilt thou do for God? Faith gives in a bill of blessings—Lo! thus God hath done for thee; he hath given thee life, estate, all kind of comforts; and what honour and service hath been done to God for all this? As that king said, Esther vi. 3, ‘What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?’ The apostle urgeth their common enjoyments: 1 Tim. vi. 17, ‘Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.’ The Lord hath enlarged his hand of

bounty ; he hath clothed thee, fed thee, and opened the treasures of the sea and land to give thee provisions ; what hast thou done for God ? Nature abhors unthankfulness. | Holy David, 2 Sam. vii. 2, his heart reasons within him, ‘ I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains ; ’ as if he had said, Here the Lord hath built me a stately house, but what have I done for the ark of God ? When you survey the great plenty and bounty of God, it is a wonder you have not such inward discourses in your souls. Carnal men are the more secure and careless of the worship of God for their outward enjoyments ; as the sun moveth slowest when it is highest in the zodiac ; but the zeal of God’s children is heightened, and their thankfulness is quickened.

[2.] Faith reasons from the promises of God, which are the common-places and topics of faith from which it gathers arguments. Now the promises that faith urgeth are promises of assistance, acceptance, and reward. Faith seeth assistance in the power of God, acceptance in the grace of God, reward in the bounty and kindness of God.

(1.) It reasons from the promises of assistance. We hate that which we cannot perform. Men love an easy religion, and such as is within the compass of their own strength and power ; therefore the apostle shows one of the reasons why carnal men are so prejudiced against the law of God, because they have no power to fulfil it : Rom. viii. 7, ‘ The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ Wickedness takes the advantage of weakness, and so the soul is prejudiced. Help engageth to actions ; when we know we have no strength, and the burden is heavy, we let it alone. The great excuse of the creature is for want of power. Now faith reasons from the promises of divine assistance, Alas ! thou art a weak creature, it is true, but God will enable thee : 2 Cor. iii. 5, ‘ Our sufficiency is of God ; ’ thou mayest be strong in God when thou art weak in thyself : 2 Cor. xii. 10, ‘ For when I am weak, then am I strong.’ An empty bucket may be the sooner filled. To what end hath God laid help upon Christ ? The soul saith, I can do nothing ; but faith replies, ‘ In the strength of Christ I can do all things,’ Phil. iv. 13. Did you ever know a command that requires grace without a promise that God would give grace ? Do not entertain jealousies of God without cause. God doth not require work and deny assistance ; he doth not desire brick and deny straw. Wait on God, and he will strengthen thee : Ps. xxvii. 14, ‘ Wait on the Lord ; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart.’ Faith encourageth the soul to wait upon God.

(2.) It reasons from the promises of acceptance. Doubts weaken the soul, and jealousy makes the heart faint and the hands feeble, and the soul is burdened in holy duties, and drives on heavily. Distrust will say, Will the Lord regard such a sinner as I am ? accept such green figs ? regard such weak and spiritless services of such an unworthy creature ? Now faith argues, Do you endeavour, God will accept you : 2 Cor. viii. 12, ‘ If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.’ Faith shows how willing Jesus Christ is to accept the service and pardon the defects of his people : Cant. v. 1, ‘ I have eaten my honey-

comb with my honey.' Faith reasons, Thou art afraid to come to God, but to what end serves a mediator? Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' Faith shows the mediator to the soul and thus argues—Upon whom do you pitch your hopes of success and acceptance? on the worthiness of your own work, or on the worthiness of Christ the mediator? Faith pointeth at Christ, Look, soul, there is an angel with a golden censer stands at the altar; he is ready to perfume the sacrifice. Though your prayers, as they come from you, are unsavoury breath in the nostrils of God, yet there is a mediator to perfume those services; they do not go immediately to God, but pass through a mediator into the hands of God: Rev. viii. 3, 4, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came up with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.'

(3.) Faith argues from the promises of reward. When the soul is backward, you do not work for nothing, or for that which is nothing worth; there is a reward: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' And they are called, 2 Peter i. 4, 'Exceeding great and precious promises.' In the original it is, *τὰ μέγιστα*—the greatest things. Now faith saith, If the world can bid more than thy Saviour hath done, choose it. Look, here is the greatest things; if you suffer loss, if your carnal interest be endamaged, it will be abundantly made up in Christ. Faith brings all to the balance, and weighs every discouragement. As the apostle seems to stand with a pair of scales, and cast in present inconveniences and future recompenses: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' I reckon and find this is too light to be compared to my joy. Faith shows there is no recompense to the joys of heaven, and no inconveniences to the torments of hell. Thus you see the reasonings of faith upon all these grounds, that it is impossible but there should be a difference between the service of believers and of carnal men.

Application.—To press you to exercise faith in all your duties of religion. James ii. 23, it is said, 'Abraham's faith wrought with his works.' Let us consider God and duty. Here arise some cases—

1. Concerning the discerning work of faith, How shall we do to see him that is invisible? or to conceive of God in prayer, so as to find an awe of him upon our spirits?

2. Concerning the receiving part of faith, How shall we do to interest ourselves in the assistance of Jesus Christ, and borrow help from heaven, when we are employed in duties of worship?

3. Concerning the reasoning work of faith, how far is assurance necessary? How shall we set faith on arguing when our evidences are dark?

Case 1. Concerning the discerning work of faith, How we shall do to see him that is invisible, and rightly to conceive of God in prayer

so far as to find an awe upon our spirits. It is a great trouble to God's children, that they are not able to form proper apprehensions and conceits of God in their approaches to him. Moses' curiosity did in part arise from this ground : Exod. xxxiii. 18, 'Lord, show me thy glory.' And the disciples were troubled that they were not able to conceive distinctly of the Father : John xiv. 8, 'Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' I know they intended a corporal sight ; however, it argues a weakness in the soul that they know not how to conceive of God as they ought to do.

I shall answer this case in several directions—

1. You must renew and revive the act of your faith in God's essence and presence.
2. You must conceive of him aright, according as he hath revealed himself.
3. There must be such a representation of God as to make the spirit aweful, not servile.
4. You must in prayer form proper notions of God, according to those requests that we put up to him.
5. Frame fit notions concerning the trinity.

See these heads fully handled, ver. 6.

SERMON XVI.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh—HEB. xi. 4.

CASE. 2. For the receiving part of faith, How shall we do to interest ourselves in the assistance of Jesus Christ ?

1. We must lie at God's feet in a sense of our own weakness ; as Jehoshaphat said in another case, 2 Chron. xx. 12, 'Lord, we have no might.' So, when you come to engage upon any duties, acknowledge your weakness : 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God,'—he speaks of the management of the work of the ministry.

2. You must plead God's promises, wherein he hath engaged to help you in holy duties. You must come and throw him his handwriting, show him his promises ; as Tamar dealt with Judah, when she showed him the ring and staff—'Whose are these ?' Gen. xxxviii. 25. Urge God with his promises in a humble plea of faith : Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope ;' Lord, is not this thine own promise ? and didst thou not by this draw out and invite my hope ? Not as if God needed the mementoes of his creatures ; but it is the only rational way to make our confidence arise. Look, as by wrestling we gain a heat to ourselves ; so we, wrestling with God by prayer, revive the grounds of our hope, —show him his own institution, that there may be greater confidence in our own souls.

3. Cast yourselves upon the performance of duty in the expectation of his help. It is true God is not bound to give the arbitrary assistances of his Spirit; he doth all things according to his pleasure. But though God be not bound, you are bound; you must engage in duty whatsoever the success be. Say then, I will do what God hath commanded, let God do what he please. There is much of faith in this. The work of faith is to bring us to a cheerful engagement. By this means God's power is glorified, that he is able to help you; and God's mercy is glorified, you leave the business with him, and trust to his mercy. And his sovereignty is much glorified when you can lie at his foot, and leave him to the working of his own grace; as David: Ps. lxxi. 16, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God,' that is, to the duty of praise; Eph. vi. 10, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' The Lord chides his children for this, because they would neglect duty out of their own discouragement. Thus, Jer. i. 7, when God sent him in a message—'Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatever I command thee thou shalt speak;' and Exod. iv. 10–12, when Moses would excuse himself—'I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. The Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say.' Weakness must never be urged to exclude duty; when there is a clear command, we should cast ourselves upon the duty, and refer the help to God's good pleasure.

Case 3. The third case respects the reasoning work of faith, How far is assurance necessary, that so faith may have some strength and encouragement, that we may be persuaded into acts of obedience by these arguments of faith? I answer—

1. We live by faith, and not by assurance. The first act of faith is vital, and unites and implants into Christ: Heb. iii. 14, 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' If you can but maintain the first act of faith, this is enough to make you partakers of Christ, when you can roll and cast the soul upon Christ.

2. Assurance is very comfortable, and we have a great loss, when we are upon terms of uncertainty. It is far better to say, Christ died for me, than barely to say, Christ died for sinners; then the arguments of faith are more sharpened, and fall with a more direct stroke upon the soul, when once you can plead, all this he hath done for me, and this is for my sake.

3. We may reason from the general acts of Christ's love, when we are not able particularly to apply them. And that gratitude is very pure when I can bless God for Christ without reflection upon my own private benefit, for putting salvation into so possible a way. This is enough to urge the soul to duties of obedience: Titus ii. 11, 12, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' That general salvation that the grace of God hath brought into the world ministers holy arguments and discourses to the soul, whereby we may resist lusts and overcome temptations—'He came into the world to

save sinners, whereof I am chief,' saith Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15. Here is some kind of application in this, when we take hold of the promises on the dark side; when we can reason as Paul—'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,' Christ died for sinners.

Now I come to handle the consequents of Abel's faith.

1. The first is a testimony—*By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.*

2. The second a special privilege—*By it he, being dead, yet speaketh.*

First, The testimony, and that is double—(1.) Of his person, 'That he was righteous;' (2.) Of his performance, 'God testifying of his gifts.' The one proves the other: he proves his person was accepted of God, because God gave testimony concerning the acceptance of his gifts. By which, by what? In the original it is δι ἡς. Some apply it to faith—by which faith he obtained witness; others apply it to sacrifice, by which sacrifice he obtained witness.

There are arguments on both sides. Most probably it must be referred to faith—'By faith he obtained witness that he was righteous.'

1. Because the apostle had laid down the general proposition; ver. 2, that 'by faith the elders obtained a good report,' and now he comes to make it good by special instances, for by it Abel 'obtained witness that he was righteous.'

2. If it be referred to offering sacrifice, the apostle would rather have said δι οὗ, by which act of his, in offering sacrifice. However, in a sound sense, it may be referred to either. His righteousness may be referred to his faith, and the testimony of his righteousness to his sacrifice, which was but the witness of his faith. It is one thing to be righteous, and another thing to obtain witness that we are righteous. By faith Abel was a righteous person *in foro cœli*, accepted in the Messiah in the court of God; but by his better sacrifice, as a fruit of faith, he obtained the testimony of his righteousness *in foro conscientie*, in his own feeling, and *in foro ecclesie*, in the solemn approbation of the church.

He obtained witness that he was righteous, ἐμαρτυρίθη εἶναι δίκαιος, he had a good report of his righteousness. It is the same word with ἐμαρτυρήθοσαν, ver. 2. How did he obtain this witness? I answer, Either in the word of God: Gen. iv. 4, 'The Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering' (and everywhere he is spoken of as a holy and righteous man; it is his solemn title, 'righteous Abel,' Mat. xxiii. 35); or else it may be meant of the respect God bore to his person and sacrifice, for so the apostle himself proveth it—'God testifying of his gifts,' viz., by some outward and visible demonstration of acceptance, to which now is equivalent the inward witness of the Holy Ghost; for when graces have their full work and exercise, God there gives in the light and comfort of them. For a more full clearing of this passage, you must know this sacrifice was an act for the election and consecration of one of the two brethren as the head of the blessed seed and race. I say, the trial now was which of them God would choose, in whose family the line of the church and the blessed generation was to be continued. As afterwards Moses puts Korah upon the like trial, when

he had a contention with Aaron about the succession and line of the priesthood : Num. xvi. 6, 7, 'This do: Take you censers, Korah, and all his company ; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow: and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy'—whom God will decide by special testimony and designation from heaven, he shall be holy and set apart. Upon such an occasion as this is were the two brothers before God at this time, as appeareth partly from God's answer to Cain, when Cain took it ill that his younger brother should be preferred before him : ver. 7, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him ;' meaning thus, if he had rightly offered, he should have been accepted with God, and have had pre-eminence, and been head of the blessed line and race. As also it appears by what is said, Gen. iv. 25, when Eve had her third son born, and she calls his name Seth, 'For God,' saith she, 'hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew ;' not only another son, but another seed ; Cain being, to their knowledge, rejected by God, she had greater joy from the birth of this son; because now there was one raised up to continue the holy seed. And it is not of small consideration that carnal hypocrites are said by the apostle, Jude 11, 'to walk in the way of Cain ;' for he is the patriarch of unbelievers, as Abel was to be the head of the believing state. This was the occasion of this solemn sacrifice, whom God would accept as holy and righteous, and as head of the blessed line. Now this was the type and sign of the general acceptance of all believers in Jesus Christ ; so that upon the whole we may pronounce that by faith he was righteous and accepted with God, and that by faith acting in his sacrifice he received witness that he was righteous, accepted, and chosen by God. By faith he was righteous, that is, by faith in the promised seed. He was not righteous by his own worth and merit; partly because it is the apostle's scope to show that the righteousness of all ages did reside in Christ, which was apprehended by the faith of the patriarchs which made them famous in the churches; and partly because his own personal merit and righteousness is actually disclaimed by his sacrifice ; for it was a sacrifice of propitiation, disclaiming of his own righteousness, and a solemn protestation of his hopes of acceptance in the promised seed.

'God testifying of his gifts.' How so? The apostle points to what was said : Gen. iv. 5, 'The Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering ; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect.' How was this known ? It must be known by some visible token, for there-upon Cain was angry with Abel, and in his envy and wrath slew his brother ; therefore there must be some token of the different acceptance of God. Now what was this visible token? Divers conceit divers things. One saith that the smoke of Cain's sacrifice was beaten downwards towards the earth, which was a testimony of God's detestation, and the smoke of Abel's sacrifice went up to heaven, as it were into the nostrils of God ; but this is a groundless conceit, that cannot be established by the least probability of conjecture. Others think that it was by some apparition of an angel, or some different appearance of God to them ; but this also is asserted without warrant or probable reason. Therefore it is most probable that this visible

sign that God gave as a token of the accepting of his offering was this—viz., the consuming of Abel's sacrifice to ashes by fire coming down from heaven. What is in the Hebrew *ywv* God respected Abel, is rendered by others ἐνεπύρισεν, God regarded Abel, and set his sacrifice on fire. And indeed there is much ground for this opinion, for this is the usual sign in the word of God of favourable acceptance. Let me name a few places to you: there is a prayer, Ps. xx. 3, 'The Lord accept thy burnt-sacrifice.' In the margin it is, 'The Lord turn thy burnt-offering to ashes, because the devouring of the sacrifice was a sign from heaven of God's acceptance.' So when God accepted Aaron's sacrifice, Lev. ix. 24, it is said, 'There came a fire out from the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.' When Solomon was accepted, 2 Chron. vii. 1, it is said, that 'fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice;' this was a solemn token. When Elijah and Baal's priests would put it to trial who was the true God, 1 Kings xviii. 38, 'The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice.' This was a token God would give to Gideon, Judges vi. 21, 'There arose fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.' Manahoh, when Samson was to be born as the deliverer of the church, Judges xiii. 20, 'The flame went up towards heaven from off the altar; and the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.' And 1 Chron. xxi. 26, when David offered solemn sacrifice to God, it is said, 'God answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.' This was the usual sign of acceptance. Fire upon the sacrifice was a token of God's favour; but fire upon the sacrificers was a token of God's curse and wrath. When Aaron's two sons had displeased the Lord 'fire came down from the Lord, and devoured them,' Lev. x. 2. So that out of subsequent experiences we may gather what kind of testimony it was. And indeed herein also, as in the sacrifice, there was some type of Christ; for he who is our sacrifice of propitiation was to be offered upon the altar of the cross; as he was to be roasted in the flames of his own love, so in the fire of divine wrath. Out of the whole you see the privileges were then more sensible. The head of the elect family God would decide; and the testimony is sensible, for fire came and devoured the sacrifice, which is now supplied us by the suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

I draw three points from the words thus opened—

1. That by faith we are justified and made righteous. It is said, '*By which* he obtained witness.'
2. That upon the solemn operation of faith in holy duties we obtain witness that we are thus righteous, and are accepted with God.
3. That the works only of such righteous persons are accepted with God.

First Abel's person is accepted in Christ by faith, and the apostle infers that, because God accepted his gifts.

Doct. 1. By faith we are justified, made righteous, and accepted with God.

Justification by faith is one of the most cardinal articles of religion; and here it is confirmed by the instance of Abel, one of the ancientest

experiences of the church. Therefore I shall not pass it over without some regard.

Three things I shall inquire into—(1.) How we are justified by faith ; (2.) Why faith is deputed to this service of all other graces ; (3.) What kind of faith it is that justifieth.

First, How we are justified by faith ?

Ans. 1. Negatively : (1.) Not by faith as a joint cause with works ; (2.) Not by faith as an act and grace in us ; (3.) Not by faith as it receives the Spirit's witness.

1. Not by faith as a joint cause with works ; as the papists say that we are justified by faith, as it receives a merit and value by works. This were to part stakes between God and the creature, and to confound the covenants, which are altogether inconsistent, as the apostle reasoneth, Rom. xi. 6, ‘If by grace, then it is no more of work ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work.’

2. Faith doth not justify as it is an act of grace in us, but relatively and instrumentally ; not as it works by love, but as it apprehends Christ ; not as if the act of believing were instead of perfect obedience to the law, but only with reference to the object as it lays hold of Jesus Christ, because of its necessary concurrence as the instrument and condition of the covenant. There are different expressions in scripture ; sometimes God is said to justify, and Christ is said to justify, and faith is said to justify, but with a different respect.

[1.] God is said to justify, and that two ways ; partly as the first moving cause. The rise of all is God the Father's mercy in ordaining Christ : Rom. iii. 24, ‘Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.’ By the antecedent and free electing love and mercy of the Father, as the first moving cause. . Partly, as the supreme judge : Rom. viii. 33, ‘Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth ;’ that is, how shall the executioner lay anything to my charge ? God is there spoken of as the supreme judge. So Rom. iii. 26, ‘The Father is said to justify him which believeth in Jesus ;’ 1 John ii. 1, ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,’ &c. In the order of the persons he sustaineth the person of the highest judge, and all things are authoritatively ordered by him.

[2.] Christ is said to justify ; as Isa. liii. 11, ‘By his knowledge shall righteous servant justify many ;’ that is, Jesus Christ, as God's righteous servant of his eternal decrees. Now Christ justifies, partly by meriting that righteousness for us which will serve for justification. It is he that hath procured it by his obedience and death, and suffering in our stead ; and therefore he is said to introduce ‘an everlasting righteousness,’ Dan. ix. 24. His obedience is the matter of our justification, being ‘the Lord our righteousness,’ Jer. xxiii. 6. And partly by interceding for us, that we may be interested in this righteousness, that the Spirit may work faith in us.

[3.] Faith is said to justify, because without it we cannot apprehend the righteousness of Christ ; as the hand may be said to feed and nourish the body, but the nutritive virtue is not in the hand, but in the meat. And therefore when faith is said to justify, it is meant, as it

receives the righteousness of Christ, and with reference to its object. There is nothing more usual than to apply that to the instrument that is proper to the object; and usually in the expressions of the word it is complicated and folded up together with its object. Faith in Christ, faith in his blood—it receives all its merit and value from thence. As also the righteousness of faith is spoken of as contradistinct from the righteousness which is in ourselves; therefore it cannot be understood of faith itself, but of the righteousness of Christ: Rom. x. 3, 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God;' and, Phil. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Yea, there are distinct places which call it 'God's righteousness,' in opposition to any act of man and make faith only to be the instrument to receive it: Rom. i. 17, 'The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith'; that is, in opposition to the act of man, procured and merited by a person, that is, God, and accepted by God: Rom. iii. 21, 22, 'The righteousness of God, which out of the law is manifested,' &c; 'even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.' We are not said to be justified *propter fidem* but *per fidem*.

3. Again, faith doth not justify in the sense of the Antinomians, as a receiving witness of the Spirit's testimony. They say there is the sealing and receiving witness, and make the sealing witness to be the Spirit of God, and the receiving witness to be faith. They take faith to be nothing else but assurance; but that is a thing that follows upon faith. We may be justified, though we have not received this solemn testimony and witness by the Holy Ghost. Assurance is spoken of as a thing consequent to faith: Eph. i. 13, 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;' first faith, then sealing. The Spirit's testimony is nothing but the certioration of grace already wrought, and is subsequent to the testimony of the renewed conscience: Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' The Holy Ghost doth not seal to a blank. First there must be faith, then the Spirit of God puts on his seal.

Ans. 2. Positively, faith only justifies as an instrument which God hath deputed to the apprehension and application of Christ's righteousness. The whole order and process is this: by effectual calling God begets faith; by faith there is union wrought with Christ; by being united to Christ there is possession of all of Christ; upon this possession God looks upon us as righteous; God looking upon us as righteous, pronounceth the sentence of justification; which sentence is double, an acquitting us from our sins, and accepting of us in Christ—we are absolved from all sin and death by a free and full pardon, and that is done chiefly by the passive obedience of Christ—and we are accepted as righteous to eternal life, and that is the fruit of his active obedience, or of his fulfilling the law for us.

1. By effectual calling God begets faith. The immediate end of effectual calling is to work faith. We are called to holiness and called

to glory ; these are expressions everywhere in the scriptures ; but the immediate fruit of calling is faith : 2 Thes. ii. 14, ‘ Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘ Whereunto,’ meaning faith, mentioned in the words before ; there is the first end of calling to close with Christ ; then the last end, that we may be glorified. The voice of all the calls and invitations of the word is, Come unto me, and come unto Christ.

2. By faith there is union wrought with Christ. Faith is the bond of the spiritual union. We are said to live in him by faith : Gal. ii. 20, ‘ The life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.’ And he is said to dwell in us by faith : Eph. iii. 17, ‘ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.’ Now union, there must be, for Christ’s garments do only cover the members of his own body.

3. Being united to Christ, we are possessed of all that is in Christ, so far as is consistent with our capacity of receiving, and God’s ordination and appointment in giving. Union gives us interest in the personal merits and righteousness of Christ, and the benefit of his mediatory actions ; they are ours to all effects and purposes, as if we ourselves had satisfied and obeyed the law. Why ? because it is not in a person severed from us ; it is in our head, in one to whom we are united by a strait bond of union, and therefore they are reputed as ours. It is true, we are not mediators and redeemers as Christ, because that is not consistent with our estate, nor with the will of God ; but it consists with the will of God, that we shall be made righteous with his righteousness : 1 Cor. i. 30, it is the Father’s pleasure, ‘ In him are ye in Christ Jesus ;’ that is, by virtue of our union, God hath willed this ; ‘ who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; ’ 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘ He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ There is as real a donation and as effectual an application of Christ’s righteousness to us, as there was of our sins to Christ. And as by virtue of the latter it pleased the Father to deal with Christ as a sinner ; so by virtue of the former it pleased the Father so to deal with us, and to accept of us as righteous. Look, as we may be by the ordination of God made guilty of Adam’s sin, though we be not in his public capacity of being a public person and representer of all mankind ; so we may be made righteous with Christ’s active obedience, though we are not mediators and redeemers, for that was his particular capacity and relation fixed in his person. In short, being united to Christ, we are interested in all his actions as if they were ours ; for when we are one with him in the spirit, then we are considered by God as one with him in law. The judicial union always follows the mystical. As the payment of the debt surely is imputed and reckoned to the debtor ; so Jesus Christ being our surety, Heb vii. 22, his righteousness is imputed to us. Therefore by union we are said, Gal. iii. 27, ‘ to put on Christ,’ with all his personal merits and righteousness.

4. Upon this God looks upon us as righteous. For mark, though justification be a judicial act, yet it is not a naked sentence of pardon without any ground or reason ; it hath a real ground and foundation, —the donation and application of Christ’s righteousness to believers. Therefore when God looks upon a sinner as a sinner, he will never

acquit him; but it is founded upon the donation of a true and perfect righteousness, proved by Christ, and communicated to believers upon God the Father's ordination and appointment; for the apostle saith, Rom. iii. 26, 'God will be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.' When a person is made thus righteous, then God is just in justifying him. God will pronounce none just but those that by faith are thus interested in the satisfaction of Christ. There is first a true donation and effectual application of Christ's righteousness, then is the sentence passed in the court of God.

5. The sentence of God is twofold—(1.) He absolves us from all sin and death, and he doth that by a free and full pardon; (2.) He accepts us as righteous to eternal life. The parts of our justification are privative and positive: John iii. 16, 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The one is done by Christ's passive obedience and the other by Christ's active obedience.

[1.] For the former part; the form of that is laid down, Job xxxiii. 24, there is the formal sentence of God the Father, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' Let that soul live, and deliver him from hell and death. Look, as when Abraham found the ram, he let Isaac go; so God, receiving a ransom, a satisfaction to his justice by the sufferings of Christ, the sinner is absolved—'Deliver him.' And indeed this is that we may plead when our consciences return upon us and implead us, that we are one in law with Christ, his ransom is our ransom: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ'; that is, I have satisfied the law in Christ. Faith must look to the surety, and see justice satisfied, and all for me: Col. ii. 14, 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.'

[2.] The second part of the sentence is accepting of us as righteous unto eternal life; for Christ hath not only satisfied the old covenant by his death, but ratified the new by his solemn obedience; not only taken away the reign of sin, but also established the reign of grace; therefore the apostle saith, Rom. v. 21, 'As sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' Now the form of acceptance to life we have in those words, Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' It will be most comfortable when we shall hear this out of Christ's own mouth at the last day.

Secondly, The reasons why faith is deputed to this service.

1. Because it is the most receptive grace. Other graces are more operative, but faith is most receptive, so fitly suiting the needy condition of the creature. It is the empty hand of the soul to take in the fulness of Christ. Since the fall man is needy and indigent, and lives by borrowing; therefore those graces are most serviceable that are most receptive. Love gives, but faith takes and borrows. We are beggars now rather than workers; therefore the honour is put upon faith rather than love.

2. Because it is most loyal and true to God. It looks for all from him, and ascribes all to him. This is the reason the apostle giveth why faith is made to be the condition of the new covenant: Rom. iii. 27, 'To

exclude boasting ;' that the creature may look for all from God. God would humble proud creatures ; whatever they have, it is but borrowed.

3. To make the way the more sure : Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.' Things are not so floating and uncertain as when built upon works. We have a sure foundation in Jesus Christ, and a sure tenure by covenant : 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.' And we have a sure holdfast by faith : Heb. vii. 19, 'Which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.'

Thirdly, The third question is, what this faith is that justifieth ? It is not a general assent, or loose acknowledgment of the articles of religion. The apostle shows that the devils may assent to the truth of the word, and brings the primitive and fundamental truth of all for the confirmation of it, that there is one God. There is a faith which (to distinguish it from all others) is called justifying, described thus—It is a grace wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God, by which the soul doth rest and cast itself upon Christ, tendered to us in the offer of God for pardon and acceptance. I shall not stand examining every part of this definition, but shall endeavour to discover the nature of faith in the acts of it. There are some things implied, and other things more express and formal in faith.

1. That which is implied in faith is knowledge and feeling.

[1.] There must be a distinct knowledge : Isa. liii. 11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ;' and therefore the faith that justified the sinner pre-supposeth knowledge. The first creature that God made was light ; and so it is in the new creation, the first thing is light. God bringeth into the soul in conversion a stock of truth as well as a frame of grace. Heathens that are wholly ignorant of Christ cannot be justified by him, nor christians that only know him at random, and by a general tradition, for this begets but a loose hope. And though none so confident as ignorant men, which make a full account, that they shall go to heaven, yet when they are anything serious, we find all their confidence to amount to no more than a bare conjecture, or a blind and rash presumption. And usually, the more ignorant the more presuming ; they cherish a blind hope. As Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once ;' that is, in his own persuasion and account. It is a long time ere men can get knowledge enough to be out of conceit with themselves, and to discern their own delusions. The blind world doth not look after justification by Christ, but only liveth by guess and devout aims ; some loose hopes they have conceived, out of common tradition and good meanings, by which they secure themselves in their fond presumption. There must be some competent and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of salvation, that we may not foster a blind and mistaken hope.

[2.] There must be upon this knowledge some feeling and experience, which the apostle means when he calleth it, Heb. vi. 5, 'Taste of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ;' some common efficacy and virtue of the spirit. There is a form of knowledge as well as a form of godliness : Rom. ii. 20, 'Which hast the form of

knowledge, and of the truth in the law ;' some unactive light and speculative contemplation, a naked model of truth, such as scholars have in the brain, or men may gain by parts and attendance on the word. But there must be some feeling and experience, which we usually call conviction ; and to consider it only as it concerns our present purpose, it respects two things—a sense of our misery, and our own inability to overcome it. Man is a secure creature, therefore there must be a sense of misery ; and man is a proud creature, therefore there must be a sense of our own insufficiency.

(1.) A sense of our misery by sin, and of God's curse due to us. This justifying faith supposeth ; for why should a man look to be justified till he be condemned ? Who would care for balm that is not wounded ? for a pardon that is not accused in his own conscience ? Man is a lazy creature, and will not apply himself to the work and care of religion, till he be spurred on and driven to it by his own need. Christ saith, Mat. ix. 12, 'They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.' Men are at ease and heart-whole, and till they are possessed with a deep sense of their own misery they do not care for Christ. The stung Israelites looked up to the brazen serpent ; and those that were 'pricked in heart cried, What shall we do ?' Acts ii. 37. Men slight mercy till they need it, and are careless of the great salvation till God affect them with the sight of their own sins and his wrath. Israel in Egypt was not easily weaned from the flesh-pots till their burdens were doubled ; so till wrath presseth to anguish, till it sits heavy upon the conscience, we do not groan for a deliverer : Jer. xv. 17, 'I sat alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation.' This makes us to sit alone, and ponder seriously upon the matter. It is true, the degree is various and different : this sense of misery worketh in some as far as horror ; in all it worketh so far as to make them anxious and solicitous about a saviour, and about our everlasting condition. In short, Jesus Christ doth not seek us till we be lost, and we do not seek him till we be lost.

(2.) There must be a sense of our own inability to help ourselves. Man is not only apt to be secure, but self-confident ; and therefore till the soul seeth nothing within itself and nothing without itself but Christ, who is the only way, we shall never go to him. Man is a proud creature, loth to be beholding. A borrowed garment, though of silk, doth not suit with proud nature so well as a russet-coat of our own. So this full satisfaction of Christ, proud man regards it not ; we go about to establish our own righteousness. Legal dejection is always accompanied with pride and self-love. The sinner is cast down, but not humbled ; doth not come and lie at the feet of Christ, that he may be beholding to him for mercy ; therefore there must be somewhat more than a sight of misery. Look, as the Corinthians did not care for Paul because they thought they were full of gifts : 1 Cor. iv. 8, 'Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us ;' no more do men for Christ, as long as they have anything of their own. This is the reason why Paul accounts not only his pharisical righteousness, but his best works loss, Phil. iii. 8, because it hindered him from looking after the righteousness of Christ. We would be sufficient to ourselves, happy within ourselves. Justifying faith implies that man hath given up all

his own confidences ; for why should we lean upon another when we have a sufficiency in ourselves ? Flesh and blood would have its own righteousness ; and as long as we can keep conscience quiet by external acts of duty, by any care and resolution of ours, we will never seek after the righteousness of Christ. It is never well till conscience be brought to say as Peter, ‘ Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life,’ John vi. 68. We must confess that all our own works are nothing ; Christ only it is that can cure and help us. This is that which is implied.

SERMON XVII.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.—HEB. xi. 4.

2. THAT which is the express and formal in justifying faith is a resting upon Christ, or a closing with Christ.

Now because here are many acts and degrees, I shall endeavour to open it to you, and that I cannot do better than in the terms of scripture. It is usual in scripture to express the tendency of the soul towards Christ by words that are proper to outward motion. There are four notions used in scripture—(1.) Coming to Christ ; (2.) Running to Christ ; (3.) Seeking of Christ ; and (4.) Receiving of Christ. All these must be explained with analogy and proportion to external motions. Coming to Christ notes the purpose and resolution of the soul ; running to Christ notes the earnest desire of the soul to enjoy him ; seeking of Christ notes the diligence of the soul in the use of means ; and receiving of Christ notes the welcoming of Christ into the soul with complacency, rest, and delight.

[1.] There is coming to Christ, which notes our first act of faith, our resolution and purpose to close with him. It implieth the lowest act and degree of saving faith. While the soul is in the way, it is said to be coming to Christ, resolved in his heart to be contented with nothing but Christ ; therefore it is expressed always by such names as imply a present motion : Phil. iii. 12, ‘ Not as though I had already attained, or were already made perfect, but I follow after,’ &c ; John vi. 35, ‘ He that cometh to me shall never hunger,’ &c.—ο ἐρχόμενος, he that is coming to me ; it implies a motion in its tendency, when we are in the way. As the prodigal determined in himself, ‘ I will arise, and go to my father,’ Luke xv. 18 ; when the soul, according to the offer of God, resolves to cast itself upon Christ for mercy and salvation. Now if this resolution be full and serious, it gives a just right and title to Christ ; for, John. vi. 37, Christ saith, ‘ He that cometh to me,—though he doth but do that,—‘ I will in nowise cast him out,’ it gives you a title. So when the prodigal said, ‘ I will arise, and go to my father,’ presently it is said ‘ The father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him,’ ver. 20,

As soon as there was a purpose, he was entertained and embraced by God. So David, Ps. xxxii. 5, when he issued forth a practical decree, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' This gives you safety and a right to Christ, though the other acts may yield you more comfort: Heb. iii. 14, 'We are made partakers of Christ,'—that is, we have a right to Christ and all his merits,—'if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end ;' that is, the first act of faith ; if we can but maintain that, it gives us a right to Christ, if we hold but our resolution to cleave to Christ, notwithstanding disadvantages. Coming implies a resolved adventure upon the invitation of God ; the soul will cast itself upon Christ, and see what God will do for it, which yields you safety, though not comfort ; when we resolve to cast ourselves upon his grace, whatever come on it ; and though we cannot lay claim to his righteousness, yet we will wait and rest upon him, whatever comes of it.

[2.] Running to Christ; that notes not only the tendency of the motion, but the fervour and earnestness of desire. The soul cannot be quiet till it be with Christ: Cant. i. 4, 'Draw me, and we will run after thee.' When God had put forth the attractive force of his grace upon the soul, then the motions of the soul are fervent and earnest: Isa. iv. 5, 'The nations that know not thee shall'—not only come, but—'run to thee.' The soul that thirsteth after Christ with such a desire as will not be satisfied without an enjoyment—this is faith ; therefore it is called 'a hungering and thirsting after righteousness,' Mat. v. 6. Hunger and thirst are those appetitions of nature which are most implacable, that cannot endure check. *Venter non habet aures*—the belly hath no ears ; and hunger and thirst will not be allayed with words and counsel. So the soul will be satisfied with nothing but Christ. It edgeth the purpose with desire ; our souls will not be quiet without him. It is resembled to the panting of the chased hart: Ps. xlvi. 1, 'As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' The soul thirsteth after the righteousness of Christ, and the comforts and refreshments of his grace. The hart of itself is a thirsty creature, especially when it is chased. The Septuagint hath it *ἡ ἔλαφος*, the she-hart. Passions in females are most vehement. Therefore the earnest longing and desire of the soul for Christ is expressed by the panting and breathing of the chased she-hart after the waters. And Cant. ii. 5, it is expressed by being 'sick of love.' Vehement affections, when satisfaction is denied, cause languor and faintness in the body ; so the soul vehemently longs and is sick for the love of Christ. Sometimes it is expressed by earnest expectation : Ps. cxxx. 6. 'My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning ; and the psalmist redoubleth it—'I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Look, as the weary sentinel that is wet and stiff with the dews of the night watcheth for the approach of the morning, so doth the poor soul wait for the dawning of grace and first appearances of God's love.

[3.] Seeking of Christ: Isa. iv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found ;' and Ps. xxvii. 8, 'Seek ye my face.' Seeking implies diligence in the use of means. Vigorous desires cannot be idle ; where there hath been running, there will be also seeking : Cant. iii. 2, 'I

will arise now, and go about the city, in the streets and broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth.' The spouse sought her beloved throughout the city. Jerusalem is a figure of the church; and in the ordinances of God christians go through the city from one ordinance to another, from meditation to prayer, from prayer to meditation, from both to the word, that still they may hear of their beloved. The earnest desire of the soul will bewray itself by the holy use of means to meet with Christ. Seeking doth not only imply a bare waiting, but a waiting in the use of means to find him whom their souls love. They are tracing his foot-steps by the shepherd's tents, and pursuing him throughout the whole city.

[4.] Receiving of Christ; this is when faith is grown, and full ripe: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power'—*ἐξονσταν*, the right and honour—'to become the sons of God.' Receiving is a considerate act of the soul by which we take Christ out of God's hand, and apply him to ourselves. And this suiteth with the formal nature of faith and the offer of God: in the covenant God offereth him, and we take him by the hand of faith; in the promises of the gospel God makes a deed of gift; and so in the Lord's supper, when we come to be infeoffed in the covenant 'Take, eat, this is my body,' 1 Cor. xi. 24. And here we come to take and receive him. Now this receiving implies an appropriation and more particular application of Christ to our use; and though it doth not go so high as assurance or an adjudging of Christ to be ours, yet there is a laying hold of Christ held out in the word of promise, and a desire to draw all things to application. Now concerning these acts of faith take these rules—

(1.) When you cannot comfort yourselves in one act of faith, you must make use of another; as, for instance, it is impossible the soul should be always running, always upon the bent of vigorous and strong desires; but do you come to him? That gives you a right to Christ, if there be a settled resolution and purpose of the soul to cleave and rest upon him and no other for acceptance with God. So you cannot take comfort in receiving of Christ; a secret suspicion draws back the hand of faith; ay, but do you seek him? You may take comfort in that. The terms are diversified in scripture lest any of them singly should trouble believers.

(2.) All the acts of justifying faith respect the person of Christ: it is coming to Christ, running to Christ, seeking of Christ, and receiving of Christ. Faith is not merely assent; in the scripture notion it is affiance. Usually men content themselves with a naked persuasion or inactive assent. The act of faith must be immediately terminated upon the person of Christ. Christ's righteousness is not obtained by an assent to the truth of any promise merely, or any proposition in the word, but by a union with Jesus Christ. We must be united before we can be possessed of his righteousness. We are not united to any promise, but to Christ. Look, as the imputation of Adam's sin is charged upon us by our union to him, so is the imputation of Christ's righteousness when we are united to him, when we take and receive him. It is not merely because you are of this opinion that Christ came to die for sinners, but there must be the hand of faith to take Christ out of the hand of God the Father, and receive him and embrace

him. There must not only be an assent in the judgment, but a consent in the heart to cleave to Christ. Christ commended Peter for his confession in saying, ‘He was the son of God,’ Mat. xvi. 16. And the devil confessed as much—‘Jesus, thou son of God, and thou holy one of God,’ Mark i. 24. Saith Austin, *Hoc dicebat Petrus, ut Christum amplecteretur; hoc dicebant dæmones, ut Christus ab iis recederet*—Peter assented to that truth, that Jesus was the son of God, but how? that he might embrace Christ; the devils assented to this truth, that Christ might depart from them.

(3.) True faith will never rest in any lower act, it is always renewing its own acts, and perfecting and ripening itself, that from weak beginnings it may grow up into some confidence before God. It ripens purposes into desires, desires into waiting, waiting into seeking, seeking into receiving, and receiving into the fulness of assurance, always struggling with doubts and fears; as John wrote his epistle to this end, that those which had believed might grow up to greater steadfastness in faith: 1 John v. 13, ‘These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that we may believe on the name of the son of God.’ As he that had faith in the Gospel is complaining of the relics of unbelief: Mark ix. 24, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’ False graces do not wrestle with that which is contrary, nor aim at growth; but living graces will be always drawing onward to perfection.

(4.) The less of comfort we receive in the exercise of faith, the more there should be of duty. Christians look too much on sensible consolation; but when by faith they can’t sensibly apply the comfort of the gospel, they should be more exercised in the duties of it. Two things are always necessary in faith, and are undoubted evidences of your gracious estate: an esteem of Christ and diligence in duty.

(1st.) An esteem of Christ. When you cannot have sensible consolation, keep up your esteem. Though they cannot say Christ is theirs, yet they can say Christ is precious to them: 1 Peter ii. 7, ‘To them that believe he is precious.’ Therefore the apostle saith, Heb. iii. 6, ‘Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm, unto the end.’ In the original it is καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος, if we can glory in the hopes of christianity whatsoever they cost us. The apostle means, when men can make an open profession that they have a good bargain in Christ, and can glory in their hope, whatever it cost them in the world. Esteem is far more than sensible comfort, and a better evidence.

(2dly) Diligence in the use of means. It is said, Prov. viii. 34, ‘Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.’ Though you are not able to apply Christ with comfort, yet you will watch at his gates for your dole of comfort. So, Isa. xxvi. 8, the church professeth this, ‘In the way of thy judgments we have waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thee, and to the remembrance of thy name.’ There is more of resolution, though less of consolation. When there is nothing but angry frowns from God, no sensible tokens of his love, yet an obstinate faith will not be discouraged.

Use. If all the righteousness which saints expect reside in Christ,

and we only receive it by faith, then it serves to press us to look after this righteousness. Take these arguments to quicken you—

1. What will you do without it? All our graces are imperfect and mixed with sin: your natures are full of sin, and your services are full of weakness. God can endure no imperfection, because of the holiness of his nature; and God will not release his law, because of the severity of his justice: Ps. cxliii. 2, ‘Enter not into judgment with thy servant.’ He doth not say, Lord, enter not into judgment with unbelievers, but with thy servants,—those that study to approve their hearts to him. There is no obtaining of the blessing, but in the garments of our elder brother. The creature’s fig-leaves will never cover a naked soul from the sight of God. We can scarce keep up a fair show before a discerning man, and what shall we do before the pure eyes of God’s glory?

2. Consider, there is a full righteousness in Christ—‘We are complete in him,’ Col. ii. 10. Whatever there is in sin, there is more in Christ; for the sin of our nature there is the absolute integrity of the human nature of Christ; and for the sin of our lives there is Christ’s perfect obedience, who did what was required, and suffered what was deserved. Justice can make no further demands. The law is fulfilled both in the commination and precept; all is done in our surety. Here is an infinite treasure that will serve you all: 1 John ii. 28, ‘And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.’ When Jesus Christ shall come in majesty and glory, if we have Christ’s righteousness, we may endure Christ’s judgment.

3. Consider the readiness of God to give you this righteousness. This was the very purpose and design of God the Father: Rom. iii. 25, ‘Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;’ John vi. 27, ‘Him hath God the Father sealed.’ He hath appointed Christ for this very end. It is not a thing of our devising, but of God’s appointment. We read of an emperor that had a great emerald made in the manner of a looking-glass, in which he was wont to look upon horrid aspects that by reflection upon the glass might be pleasing to him, that there he might see the bloody contest with delight. This God the Father hath done; he hath set forth Jesus Christ, that so in him we might be acceptable and pleasing in his sight.

4. It is as really ours when it is given as if we had merited in our own persons. God’s judicial acts are not grounded upon a fiction, but upon a truth. Look upon the relation as you are espoused and betrothed to him. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*—a wife shares in all the honours of her husband; so we are possessed of what is in Christ. The debtor is acquitted by the payment of the surety. The members share in the honour of the head. Look, as Christ satisfied for your sins as if he had committed them, so thou art accepted for his righteousness as if thou hadst satisfied: 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘He was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ It is good to consider how really Christ was handled; so real will our acceptance be with God. Christ lay under the wrath of the Father; his sufferings were not a fiction, no more are thy privileges.

5. Consider the excellency of this righteousness in two respects.

(1.) It is better than that we had in Adam in innocency ; that would have been but the righteousness of man, but this is the righteousness of God ; as Rom. iii. 22, it is called ‘the righteousness of God which is by faith.’ We are now in a nearer relation to the Lord than in Adam, being united to God by Christ. Adam was but God’s servant, but we are made his sons and children ; the union and relation is nearer. The prodigal after his return hath the best robes, Luke xv. 22. Nay, in some sense our case is better than that of angels : angels are confirmed by Christ, but it is in their own righteousness ; but the righteousness of Christ is ours. (2.) You are as righteous as the most righteous saints are ; as David that was a man after God’s own heart, Abraham that was the friend of God, men that had such access and familiarity with God : Rom. iii. 23, ‘The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference.’ None of the saints have cleaner linen, nor are decked with a better vesture. In sanctification there are degrees, and a great deal of difference ; but not in justification. As in the manna none had over, none under, all alike proportion and measure ; so in the righteousness of Christ all have a like measure : 2 Peter i. 1, ‘To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of Christ.’ It is a righteousness of the same nature and property ; the foundation of it being in Christ, it is all one. It is said, Acts xi. 17, the gentiles had obtained ‘a like gift with us ;’ that is, the same gift that the apostles had. Luther had an apt comparison to set out this : a giant holds a jewel in his hand, and a child may hold the same jewel ; but the giant holds it with a stronger hand ; so, though there be different degrees of faith, yet herein it is all alike precious ; it is the same righteousness of Christ.

6. Consider the fruits and benefits of this righteousness.

[1.] Access to God. We may minister before the Lord in our priestly garments, we may worship in the holy place when Christ hath put his robes upon us. When Joshua the high priest was before the Lord, he was there in his filthy garments, Zech. iii. 5 ; but he was clothed with change of raiment to minister before the Lord. So we had filthy garments ; therefore the Lord comes and takes them away, and clothes us with clean garments : Eph. iii. 2, ‘In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.’ Our imperfections need not encourage us ; Christ’s righteousness is not a covering that is too short. It is said, Rev. i. 13, Christ was clothed ‘with a garment down to his feet.’ Christ’s righteousness is a long garment ; all our defects are removed out of the light of God’s countenance. When Joseph was brought out of prison before Pharaoh, his raiment was changed ; so when we are to appear before God, the king of kings, certainly our raiment must be changed : Isa. lxiv. 6, ‘Our righteousness is as filthy rags,’ saith the church. Now, that we might not appear before the great king with a bundle of rags, Christ hath dyed us a purple robe in his own blood, that our garments may be changed, and we may come with boldness.

[2.] We are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin, so that all afflictions have lost their curse and sting, and are become medicinal. We may have bitter dispensations many times, but they are not salted

with a curse. We may cry with Luther, Strike, Lord! strike! my sins are pardoned. When God hath laid up comfort in the heart beforehand, all our corrections lose their property, and they are federal dispensations; as David: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' When God thresheth us, it is but that our husk may come off. They are not acts of revenge to satisfy justice, but only to free us of a mischievous disease; and death is a friend, it is a remedy whereby we may be delivered into glory: 1 Cor. xv. 55, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

[3.] This will give us comfort in the hour of death. When the soul, smitten with the sense of sin, is drawn to the tribunal of God, oh then, the righteousness of Christ is a comfort. Chemnitius observeth, *Aliter de justificatione sentire homines, quando in disputationibus cum hominibus sui simillimis rixantur; aliter in meditationibus, quando corum Deo sistunt conscientiam.* Men dealing with men like themselves may cry up works; but when they plead their cause before God, then who can speak of his own righteousness? Then they tremblingly fly to the horns of the altar and to mercy. There is no screen to draw between us and wrath but Christ, no way to answer justice but in the satisfaction of Christ, no way to appear before holiness but by the obedience of Christ. Let one of those audacious volume writers come and say, Lord, cast them out of heaven that cannot approve themselves to thee by their own graces.

[4.] Then we are made heirs of eternal glory; therefore it is called justification unto life. A pardoned person is made a favourite: Rom. viii. 30, 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Christ doth not only prevent the execution, but we are also saved. It is much to be delivered from wrath to come: Rom. v. 9, 'Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;' as if it were a lesser thing to glorify a saint than to justify a sinner. When God can accept of us out of his free grace, certainly he will give us heaven.

Ques. You will say, What shall I do? Here is nothing to do but to receive and take Christ out of the hands of God. We are not exhorted to justify ourselves as we are to sanctify ourselves. Justification is God's act; yet there must be something done to obtain it; not by way of causality, but by way of order. God doth not justify stocks and stones, but men; neither doth he justify mules and horses, and those that will kick again, but those that will submit to his righteousness. A sick man must yield to take physic, and a poor man must hold out his hand to receive an alms.

There are two general means—(1.) Disclaim your own righteousness; (2.) Apply yourselves to the righteousness of Christ.

First, Disclaim your own righteousness. In the new covenant he cometh most worthy that cometh most unworthy; Christ speaks a 'parable against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous,' Luke xviii. 9. There one comes and pleads his works, as appealing to justice; the other comes and pleads his sins, as waiting for mercy. What is the issue of all? It is said, ver. 14, 'This man went away justified to his house rather than the other.' We must come sinners

into his presence ; the sinner is justified rather than the worker. We must come naked, that he might give us raiment. Take notice of Paul's solemn renunciation, Phil. iii. 7-9, ' What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.' He had more cause than any to have confidence in the flesh and glory in himself ; but all this was so far from being a gain, as they were a loss to him. He thought it was an advantage and a step to mercy, when it was a dangerous allurement to hypocrisy and self-confidence. He reckons up his moral excellences, his natural privileges, and his own righteousness ; but all this was so far a disadvantage to him as they kept him from being hungry and more earnest after the righteousness God offered to him in Christ.

Now because this is a hard matter, a man would fain maintain the dignity of works, and proud nature is loth to stoop and sue *in formâ pauperis* ; and men would rather oblige God than come as beggars and be beholden to him : Rom. x. 3, ' Going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' It is a matter of great difficulty to captivate the pride and prejudices of reason ; therefore I shall lay down the more effectual considerations that are likely to draw us off from our own righteousness, and bring us to submit and yield to God's terms. I shall lay down five considerations—The exact purity of the law, the holiness of God, our proneness to sin, the strictness of the last day's account, and the danger of resting upon anything in ourselves.

1. Consider the exact purity of the law. Usually men are alive in their own hopes and conceits, because they do not look as they should into the law of God : Rom. vii. 9, ' I was alive without the law once.' While Paul looked upon the law through pharisaical spectacles, he thought he was perfect and alive,—that is, in a good condition before God ; ' but when the commandment came,'—that is, with full light and conviction,—' sin revived, and I died ; ' Paul was struck dead, then it revived the sentence of death in himself. A short exposition of the law begets a large opinion of our own righteousness. We are all Pharisees by nature, and in the private glosses of our own thoughts, we regard no more of the law than external obedience, *ἔργον νόμου*, the mere work of the law, and therefore we are not driven to seek the righteousness of Christ. We see it plainly that common people hope to be saved by their good works and good meanings. The more ignorant men are, the greater confidence in themselves. That is the reason the apostle saith, Rom. x. 3, ' Being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own.' Men do not consider what a righteousness becomes God's presence. Now when the law comes, it gives sin its due dimensions, and the sinner his due load and burden. Oh ! look then into the purity of the prohibition ; for the law condemns not only acts, but thoughts ; not only sins perfectly formed, but lusts ; it reacheth to the little foxes and Babylon's brats. And in duty it doth not only require the work wrought, but an exquisite frame of spirit, with the motions and opera-

tions of the soul ; all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy might. It is no matter though our meaning be good ; the law would have us bring our duties and acts of obedience not only to the touchstone, but to the balance ; it must hold exact weight, as well as be of a good kind.

2. Consider the holiness of God. The great business of justification is to give us a righteousness that will endure God's sight, that we may be able to stand before God ; hence those phrases, 'justified in his sight,' Ps. cxliii. 2, and Rom. iii. 20 ; and 'glorying before God,' Rom. iv. 2 ; and 'the answer of a good conscience towards God,' 1 Peter iii. 21. So that if we would look for a proper righteousness fit for justification, we are to draw the soul into God's sight, and to think of the pure eyes of his glory. Now it is said, Job xv. 15, 'The heavens are not clean in his sight,' that is, the holy ones in heaven, the angels that are confirmed in their own righteousness, they are not clean in the sight of God's holiness. They not only cover their feet, that is, that which is the meanest and lowest of the angelical nature, but their faces, that which is most glorious in their nature ; they were ashamed of that which was best in their nature, as being abashed at the presence of God's holiness. Oh ! what will become of us vile worms ? 'What is man, that he should be clean ? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?' Job xv. 14. If the court of heaven be not clean in his presence, how shall we do for a righteousness that must endure the eyes of God's glory ?—'Who can stand before this holy God ?' 1 Sam. vi. 20. Alas ! in the state you are, you can no more expect that God should delight in you than you can delight in a toad, because of the contrariety of nature ; yet this is but a finite comparison. Now in vain is it to think God should act contrary to his nature, that ever holiness itself should delight in a sinner. Oh ! what shall I do to come before God's holiness ?

3. Consider our proneness to sin. Men that have low thoughts of the degeneration and corruption of nature have as low thoughts of the righteousness of Christ ; therefore consider how corruption is apt to bewray itself in duty, business, recreation, in all conditions and actions of life ; all is tainted : 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about,' Ps. xl. 12. And consider, whoever appears before God must be clothed with some righteousness. Now go to our duties,—'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' Isa. lxv. 5. The better part of our lives are spotted and defiled. Certainly those works that need pardon themselves can never justify us. *Mala mea purè, mala sunt et mea ; bona autem mea, nec purè bona sunt, nec mea*—our evil works, they are merely evil, and they are ours ; but our good works are neither ours ; nor are they purely good. Certainly a man cannot merit with that which doth not deserve acceptance.

4. Consider the strictness of the last day's account. Justification is principally intended for that time. Christ's righteousness was appointed for Christ's judgment : 1 John ii. 28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' This God aimed at, to establish such a righteousness that we might not be ashamed at Christ's coming : 1 John iii. 21, 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God ;' and Luke xxi. 36, you have the like expres-

sion, ‘That ye may stand before the Son of man.’ Now when every idle word shall be weighed in God’s balance, what will you do then? Things will not be huddled up at that day, but conscience will be extended to the recognition of all the sins you have committed; and what will you do for a righteousness at that day, when the secret stores of your thoughts and the hidden things of the heart shall be made manifest: 1 Cor. iv. 5, ‘Until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ Light words will weigh heavy in God’s balance. The comfort of justification is never tried till the last judgment.

5. Consider the danger of resting upon anything in ourselves. Alas! when you go to mix the covenants, you quite undo your hopes in Christ; it is plain you hold by the former covenant. If you do but set up anything of self, it makes the promise of Christ of none effect. Here you are put to your choice by what covenant you will be judged; either the covenant of works, in which there is judgment without mercy, or by the law of liberty. If you set up yourself, you cast off the new covenant. Carnal confidence rendereth you obnoxious to the whole law: Gal. iii. 18. ‘For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise.’ If you hold by the former covenant, you are quite undone; you shall not have a drop of grace: Rom. xi. 6, ‘If it be of works, it is no more grace.’ You are bound to fulfil the whole law; if in any case you set up self, ‘Christ shall profit you nothing,’ Gal. v. 2. God will deal with you, either altogether by works, or altogether by Christ; these things cannot be mixed. When you seek to piece up the righteousness of Christ by any graces or duties of yours, by resting in yourselves, you destroy the whole. It must not be a patched righteousness; the piece of new cloth maketh the rent the worse.

END OF VOLUME XIII.



